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**The Work of Death in the Americas: Narrative, Necropolitics and the Historical Romance in the Post-Revolutionary Era**

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# The Work of Death in the Americas: Narrative, Necropolitics and the Historical Romance in the Post-Revolutionary Era

by

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For Nathan.
Because mourning makes us who we are.
But some of us more than others.

Take this, this Psalm, from me, burst from my hand in a day, some of my Time, now given to Nothing--to praise Thee--But Death
This is the end, the redemption from Wilderness, way for the Wonderer, House sought for All, black handkerchief washed clean by weeping --page beyond Psalm--Last change of mine and Naomi--to God's perfect Darkness--Death, stay thy phantoms!

-Allen Ginsberg, *Kaddish*

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Jillian J. Sayre, Ph.D.

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This dissertation is a transnational study that argues that a structure of mourning, spoken through and effected by the historical romance, underlies the narrative of national culture as it emerges in the Americas during the early nineteenth century. The writing, consumption and preservation of these texts reveal not only the psychic life of community but also the material basis for that psychic life. Writing and reading, the production and circulation of texts, plays a crucial role in developing this psychic life, and the historical romance was particularly important in the Americas for imagining a national legacy. Current criticism emphasizes the sexual coupling and generative romantic structure of the marriage plot around which many of these novels circulate. This criticism emphasizes the somatic nature of the genre, the corporeal language of romance that is read in the tears of joy and grief spilled by its characters as well as its readers. But while I agree that a libidinal energy is at the heart of both the narrative and its readers' responses, I argue that the focus on sexual coupling neglects to consider another bodily discourse: that of death and mourning. Mourning enacts a simultaneous identification with and desire for a lost object, a fetishistic relationship that brings together the Freudian "to be" and "to have" and so invests the lost object with both narcissistic and communal attachments. These texts offer their readers the bodies within the narratives, as well as the texts themselves, as the

material of a cultural heritage, constructing a nativism that ties the subjects to the land and to the community through a shared lost artifact, their history. Through mourning a common object, the subjects become citizens, native Americans that distance themselves from Europe while supplanting the Amerindian. In combining modern studies of material culture with post Freudian psychoanalytic criticism, the dissertation works to make explicit the relationship between death, citizenship and textuality in order to show the cultural work of fictional historiography in the making of the American nations.

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**Prolegomenon**
**Working Through John Brown's Body, An Exercise in Mourning**

> "Unfortunately, nothing can be said which in [the historians'] opinion has not been said before, and truly the same prophecy applies to all future times; for since human reason has for many centuries speculated upon innumerable objects in various ways, it is hardly to be expected that we should not be able to discover analogies for every new idea among the old sayings of past ages."
> -Kant, *Prolegomena*

## I. The meteor

The history of December 2, 1859 begins for us in 1865, with a novelist-turned-poet who, being struck by the imminent victory of the Union, takes up his pen to draw. Herman Melville had not published in eight years when he started his *Battle-Pieces*, and it was the urge to paint an elegy for the war, to render in words the scenes of struggle and death, that brought him back to storytelling. The poems attempt to document "the terrible historic tragedy" by resurrecting its ghosts and presenting them in an aggressively visual manner (Melville 202). Battle-pieces were then better understood as a genre of painting and the poems' evocative presentations of bodies and lands mimic the sketches and paintings to which the title refers.[1] Melville's was a history made present to the reader, or rather the reader made witness to the events of history, a method

[1] Hennig Cohen notes:

> The figurative use of *battle-pieces* as a literary term is now more common than its use to indicate a genre of painting, but when Melville took it as the title for his collection of war poems, he did so with an awareness of its primary meaning…Its visual connotation was important to him, and to make certain that his readers were apprised that he was presenting a series of pictures, he added the subtitle "Aspects of the War"(15)

that not only served a documentary process but also a cultural mourning that attempted to heal and reconcile a community by forcing it to relive, once again, its own pain, suffering, and dissolution. Melville ends the book with just this meditation on the (re)constructive work of mourning. "Let us pray," he says, "that the terrible historic tragedy of our time may not have been enacted without instructing our whole beloved country through terror and pity; and may fulfillment verify in the end those expectations which kindle the bards of Progress and Humanity" (202). This healing process that Melville enacts in his poetry is *instructional*, teaching the subject the acceptable way to feel, as well as providing the correct objects toward which to direct this feeling, objects that represent a *progressive* mourning. Through such a purging, an externalization and communalization of internal experience, the community overcomes the strife of individual passions and ambitions.[2] In this way, the poems work to produce a communal *affect*, a cathartic feeling together and a feeling as one, through the sentimental experience of history itself.

Presiding over the book, marking the stark rhythm of its verse like a pendulum "Hanging from the beam,/Slowly swaying," is John Brown's body (35). "The Portent" is Melville's record of Brown's death and its impact on the war:

*Hanging from the beam,*

*Slowly swaying (such the law),*

*Gaunt the shadow on your green,*

[2] The object Melville offers for this exchange is not simply the individual sketches of the War, but a shared loss in the form of the past itself, the *historic* nature of the tragedy ("the terrible historic tragedy") that removes the community from trauma, transforming the morass of the recent past into history or History.

*Shenandoah!*

*The cut is on the crown*

*(Lo, John Brown),*

*And the stabs shall heal no more*

*Hidden in the cap*

*Is the anguish none can draw;*

*So your future veils its face,*

*Shenandoah!*

*But the streaming beard is shown*

*(Weird John Brown)*

*The meteor of the war*

The poem is set apart from the rest of the collection: a blank folio intervenes between it and the rest of the text, it is the only poem set entirely in italics, and it is the only poem to address an event prior to the war.[3] But even as the poem insists on its singularity and difference, its subject, Brown's body, sets history in motion, making possible the war that Melville is about to recount and also giving space for that telling. John Brown's body provides a material foundation for Melville's narration of events because Brown intercedes between the situated author (Melville in 1865) and the abyssal past, making writing, and here the writing of history, possible. Historiography, Michel de Certeau asserts, depends on the "rupture between a subject and an

[3] Kent Ljungquist also notes that the poem does not appear in the table of contents in the first edition of *Battle-Pieces* (674).

object of the operation, between a *will to write* and a *written body*" (*Writing* xxv-xxvi). This writing is only possible when the historian can differentiate past from present, finding in such a separation the "absent figure" onto which to write (2). This possibility of narration is what leads critic Robert Pogue Harrison to assert that society and culture are necrogenic, that, insofar as we inhabit the world historically, the dead provide the material basis for new and emerging life. The world, in this structure, is built upon what he calls a *humic* foundation, "one whose contents have been buried so that they may be reclaimed by the future" (Harrison x). This burial (*humus*) humanizes the ground, plants our history at our feet, ready to be dug up, and in this way temporalizes spatial awareness: it gives us a *place*, both a space and a time, in which to dwell, from which we can write history, through which we can pass on our dead, bequeath a heritage for those to come. When Melville calls for Progress and Humanity from the theater of death, this foundational work of the dead provides the material for his project, serving as the object for a conciliatory mourning.

Melville's history relies on the mediatory figure of John Brown whose death renders narratable the events of the war and whose body speaks in the place of the author. The wounds of the nation, the scarring of the land and the people that are presently described in the poems about the war are already writ large on Brown's body itself, in the cut on his crown, in the stab wounds unable to heal. Brown is coequal with and cause for the history that has yet to occur. The addressee of the poem, the "you" of the Shenandoah Valley destroyed by the war, is simultaneously darkened by Brown's person ("Gaunt the shadow on your green") and confused and made one with the executioner's victim. It is Brown's head that is "Hidden in the cap," even as it is Shenandoah whose "future veils its face." Finally, with Brown's "streaming beard" made

the "meteor of the war," he is rendered as both symbol and sign of the war, its meaning, a catastrophic event, and its language, a message in the sky. Brown's body thus overcomes the muting forces of the veil, the "hidden…anguish none can draw," and becomes not only the material of the past but also its narrator. The seer, blinded by the "cap" tells the future of the war, his beard the "meteor" that sets its trajectory. Painted as the meteor, the sign from heaven, the poet makes of Brown a symbol of fatalism, transforms him into a prophet and so brings into doubt the question of individual culpability or authorship. As divine ordinance, the prophet lives in service of the message, the future foretold and directed by an external hand. Brown, in this poem, is medium, not man. John Brown, "weird" as the sisters in *Macbeth*,[4] translates and testifies to a divine, proleptic history that elides Melville's own position as author and the connection between history and fiction, between the truth of the event and the (re-) creative work of the author. This intervention of the dead makes historiography, according to French historian Michel de Certeau, "a discourse of the dead…*a discourse in the third person*" (*Writing* 46, emphasis in original); the mediation of the speechless body allows the historian to occult his own

[4] Robert Penn Warren made this notable connection between Melville's Brown and the "weird," prophetic sisters of Shakespeare's tragedy (351). I would expand that comparison to include the ways in which fiction or narrative in general is implicated in the writing of history. *Macbeth* is usually classified as a tragedy, but because Shakespeare relies on historical figures (and a contemporary heritage in the form of Banquo's relation to King James I) to drive the action of his play, a modern classification could be that of, if not a straightforward history play, a form of historical romance. Greg Foran notes that plays about regions other than England (such as Scotland) or those about England's recent past (*Lear*) were not classified as histories, rendering *other* or *fictional* that which was too close (temporally) or too far (geographically, ethnically). Foran investigates this blurring of tragedy and historiography and specifically *Macbeth*'s fortune-telling sisters in his forthcoming dissertation "King Hereafter: Macbeth and Apocalypse in the Stuart Discourse of Sovereignty" (University of Texas).

narrative responsibility, the interested nature of his discourse. History, in this construction, is a religious text that can only be accessed through its prophet, who is already dead.

**II. Writing the Event/The Angel of Light**

On December 2, 1859, John Brown was executed; he was left to hang for a few minutes, quietly placed in a box, and taken to his wife in Harper's Ferry; the guard opened the coffin twice before it left the state, just to make sure he was still there. The body of the abolitionist, would-be insurrectionist, and convicted traitor was a source of anxiety for the State of Virginia and for the nation at large. His execution was closed to the general public; the witnesses consisted mainly of the military guard ordered by the governor to attend Charles Town with the goal of diminishing the rebellious potential of the spectacle. No "unrecognized citizens" were allowed, nothing "done for show" as one of the officers observed (Preston). The State of Virginia effectively censored the event, believing that the danger resided in physically witnessing Brown's death, that the event, as a single instant, could not be effectively reproduced. The historical instant of his death, though, is *preserved as text* in letters guarded in the archive at Virginia Military Institute; in them Brown's lonely execution finds an audience in letters home and military reports. One of the officers, "Stonewall" Jackson, wrote to his wife of John Brown's body in a 'battle piece' reminiscent (in advance) of Melville's work. "Brown fell through about 25 inches," he writes, "With the fall his arms below the elbow flew up, hands clenched, and his arms gradually fell by spasmodic motions---there was very little motion of his person for several minutes, after which the wind blew his lifeless body to & fro" (T. J. S. Jackson). In the letter,

Brown's body provides material for the intimate communication between man and wife. Jackson paints Brown's death in this aggressive detail in order to make Mary Anna present, so that she can, through his words, through this body, see the act as if she were there. In this communication, Jackson *testifies* to his wife, making the unicity of the instant, as Derrida calls it, exemplary but also, in turning testimony into text, prosthetic and thus repeatable.[5]

This textual experience of Brown's death, this communion through his body, is only one in an entire corpus of Brown writings, both by the man himself and his supporters in the North, that rendered ineffectual the state's attempt to secure his physical body. Several of these texts, like Melville's poem, were composed as historical reflection, but a surprising number of them were written *previous* to that fateful day in December. In fact, Brown had been dying for years, the man's body circulated in sermons and speeches, put on display in newspapers and pamphlets. Even though Virginia attempted to control the event, it had already been *seen* by hundreds of

[5] In *Demeure*, Derrida argues the following about testimony:

> The technical reproducibility is excluded from testimony, which always calls for the presence of the live voice in the first person. But from the moment that a testimony must be able to be repeated, *techné* is admitted; it is introduced where it is excluded. For this, one need not wait for cameras, videos, typewriters, and computers. As soon as the sentence is repeatable, that is, from its origin, the instant it is pronounced and becomes intelligible, thus idealizable, it is already instrumentalizable and affected by technology. And virtuality. It is thus the very instance of the instant that seems to become exemplary: exemplary in the very place where it seems unique and irreplaceable, under the seal of unicity. And it is perhaps here, with the technological both as ideality and prosthetic iterability, that the possibility of fiction *and* lie, simulacrum *and* literature, that of the right to literature insinuates itself, at the very origin of truthful testimony, autobiography in good faith, sincere confession, as their essential compossibility.(42)

Here the very *textuality* is itself the technology of circulation and reproducibility. Its virtuality is a function of the mediation of the object (letter) as Mary Anna is made present to the instant through the consumption of the text.

readers, it had already come to pass, making the event itself the realization of a text, a fulfillment of prophecy.

John Brown's body had been in circulation in Northern homes for years previous to his execution. After gaining notoriety, if not fame, in the bloody struggle for Kansas, Brown returned to New England to relate his experiences to sympathetic audiences. Brown used his own tale of struggle and death to solicit material support for his cause, testifying to the violence that had left free Kansas "a vast sepulchre" ("An Idea" 61). His dark testimony, the voice coming from the grave or sepulchre, painted a moving picture and transformed Brown himself into a folk hero that intervened on behalf of the helpless but also, as an actor, on behalf of those ideologically connected to his cause yet physically distant from the struggle. One trope that illustrated Brown's connection to his New England supporters was the figure of the Puritan. Julia Ward Howe, the prominent author and social reformer, remembers Brown appearing in her home for a conference with her husband, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe. In her *Reminiscences* she describes Brown, remarking, "He looked a Puritan of the Puritans," connecting his body to an important American religious heritage (254). Lydia Maria Child called Brown "a Psalm-singing, praying old Puritan" (quoted in, Reynolds "Cultural Biography" 87), and Emerson also made this comparison, calling Brown "a fair specimen of the best stock of New England." "*Our* farmers," Emerson remarked, "were Orthodox Calvinists, mighty in scripture" (Emerson 120) and John Brown was a reminder of that shared cultural inheritance.[6] Brown himself reminded his readers

[6] Recent revivals of the John Brown corpus have also focused on John Brown, Puritan. Criticism surrounding Russell Banks' *Cloudsplitter* (2006) focused on Brown as the figure who marshals the "transition from Puritan to Yankee" (Hutchison 68). Even David Reynolds' recent biography *John Brown, Abolitionist* sees Brown's Calvinism as a notable factor in his development and

of his *historic* character, recalling his ancestor "Peter Brown from the Mayflower" and his grandfather, Captain John Brown, who died during the Revolution ("Letters" Nov. 19). As the incarnation of a national body, John Brown places himself in historical continuity rather than violent rupture with present-day citizens, arguing for their shared values while reminding them of debts owed to the dead.

Howe also remembers her husband laying claim to a much greater religious body for Brown, comparing his devotion to emancipation to Christ "who had willingly offered his life for the salvation of mankind" (254). Brown's work was a salvation that necessitated sacrifice and, like Christ, the sacrifice was his own body. This comparison also appeared in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Victor Hugo. Months before Brown's body caught the wind on that field in Charles Town, Emerson caused a stir by proclaiming Brown "the new saint awaiting his martyrdom," one who "will make the gallows glorious like a cross"[7] (quoted in Cabot 597).

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reception (he has an entire section of the biography devoted to developing a theory of the Puritan abolitionist called, in his alliterative structure, "The Puritan") (*John Brown*). But while Reynolds insists that Brown's strict Calvinism functioned to divide or isolate him from his community, statements such as that made by Child et al show that Brown's physical (Howe) and spiritual (Emerson) connections formed the basis of a shared history and thus a locus of identification with Brown (and through Brown to an American History itself). Reynolds, though, marks a clear distinction between "life facts" and a "literary personae" (Reynolds "Cultural Biography" 85), arguing that the work of the Historian is to "[separate] *person* from literary personae," the latter he declares to be "the *lie* of literary voice" (84). I would forward that Reynolds distrusts the "literary personae" too much, particularly in the case of a man such as John Brown, whose "reflection" of and "impact" on his era, as well as his "transcendence" of that social scene (Reynolds three key concepts of cultural biography), depend greatly on who he was as a *textual* figure. Reynolds' desire for (and belief in his privileged access to) presence, though, is indicative of the Historian's narrative in general (Certeau *Writing*).

[7] This was a spoken comment not included in the published version of "Courage" delivered on Novermber 7, 1859. A controversy circulated based largely on the confusion of articles (between "the" cross and "a" cross). The *New York Daily Tribune* reported on the speech and this statement the following day, writing that Emerson said that Brown "will make the gallows as

Brown's death was not only foretold by these writers but also integral to their conception of the man himself.

One of the most famous of these John Brown elegies was Henry David Thoreau's "A Plea for Captain John Brown" in which the transcendentalist "[pleads] not for his life but for his character – his immortal life" ("Plea" 121). In this plea for Brown, written over a month before the man would be executed,[8] Thoreau declared that he "is not Old Brown any longer; he is an angel of light" (121). Because of this transformation, the author finds himself speaking of Brown in the past tense; "He *was*," Thoreau says, "the most American of us all" (117, emphasis added). This tendency, he says, to "anticipate a little," to "[think] and [speak] of him as physically dead" (118), comes from Brown's relation to death itself. "This event," Thoreau declares, speaking of

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glorious as *the* cross" (McDonald 386, emphasis added) while most biographers, including Cabot, insist that Brown said "like *a* cross." Hawthorne famously "shamed" Emerson for his statement in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* saying, "I shall not pretend to be an admirer of old John Brown…nor did I expect ever to shrink so unutterably from any apophthegm of a sage…that the death of this blood-stained fanatic has 'made the Gallows as venerable as the Cross!'" (Hawthorne) When Emerson reviewed the reported words, he only said "That's *about* what I said" (quoted in McDonald 387, emphasis added). McDonald notes that despite the statement being expunged from the written record of his speeches, Emerson's gallows statement "did not die an easy death – it was printed in Redpath's biography of Brown (1860) and in at least one of Emerson's obituaries" (388). The survival of the statement (beyond its own death in print and the death of its author) speaks to both the salience of the sacrificial economy to which it attests as well as the diminishment of a *real* or *presence* in the face of the text or narrative. It does not matter exactly what was said – even Emerson denies resolution in his statement – but rather what is circulated and consumed.

[8] Thoreau first delivered the speech in October and the printed version had the following head note: "read to the *citizens* of Concord, Mass., Sunday evening, October 30, 1859; also as a fifth lecture of the Fraternity Course, in Boston, November 1, 1859" (38). It is notable that Thoreau addresses his plea to a *citizenry*, a plea that emphasizes the moral character of a social body, one that *feels together*. He uses Brown to develop an idea of national character, a return to native subjects that "the poet will sing…the historian record," subjects that "will be the ornament of some future national gallery." "We shall then," Thoreau argues, " be at liberty to weep for Captain Brown" (121). Brown's death is posited here as a *future* heritage, the imminence of a national body.

the instant of Brown's death that has not yet occurred except in text, "advertises me that there is such a fact as death" (120). It is through Brown that the community rediscovers death and so, like his contemporaries that likened the abolitionist to Christ, Thoreau writes a necessary sacrifice onto Brown's body: "I *almost fear* that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if *any* life, can do as much good as his death" (121, emphasis in original). In a sermon Henry Ward Beecher delivered for Plymouth Church, the minister ordered that "no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr…[A] cord and a gibbet would redeem all that, and round up Brown's failure with a heroic success." John Brown agreed with Beecher. When he was given the sermon to review, he returned the text complete with his own marginalia. Next to this passage asking for his death, the abolitionist simply wrote "Good!" (Scheidenhelm 91).

Brown often found himself "anticipating," speaking of himself in past tense. He addressed his wife in letters from prison as "my poor bereaved widowed wife" (Brown "Letters" 90) and compared himself to martyrs like John Rogers (95) and the Apostle Paul (97).[9] He wrote from prison: "I think I feel as happy as Paul did when he lay in prison. He knew if they killed him it would greatly advance the cause of Christ; that was the reason he rejoiced so. On that same ground 'I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.'" He concludes his citation by making an even greater comparison, taking the words of Christ in his own mouth. "Let them hang me," he says, "I forgive them, and may God forgive them, for they know not what they do" (97). For Brown, it is this inscribed death that brings him into cultural life, and it is the textual spectacle of his body,

[9] John Rogers was the first Protestant martyr under Mary I of England. He was burned at the stake on February 4, 1555 and is remembered for the brave, even joyful manner in which he met his death. (Daniell).

an instant testified to over and over again that rallied Northerners in support, much as the Virginia governor had feared from the actual execution. Like Christ's death, Brown's execution was necessary, premonitory; like Christ, Brown's cultural work was and is predicated on the destruction of his own body. Writing and reading these texts, composed in the future anterior (he *will have* died for us), consuming the body of the aged abolitionist, acted as a communion that consolidated a *commun*ity of supporters.

Even those who did not support Brown's cause would acknowledge his sacrificial economy. Three weeks after Brown's execution, John Greenleaf Whittier published his Ossawatomie poem that argued Brown's "guilty means" (Whittier l. 11) were cleansed by "the Christian's sacrifice" (16). Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous rejection of Brown, "Nobody was ever more justly hanged," demonstrates the author's understanding of Brown's necessary death and its affective potential. "He won his martyrdom fairly," Hawthorne tells his readers, changing the adverb "justly" from one of condemnation to balance or justice that Brown *wins* instead of suffers. Being "justly hanged" is a fair exchange of action and consequence, the forfeiture of "the life which [Brown] had staked and lost." Hawthorne's understanding of Brown's death gives new light to Melville's body "Slowly saying (such the law)." The "law" here implicates both a secular legal system as well as a natural one (gravity) and in both the poem and Hawthorne's statements death is responsibly *given* ("such the law") rather than unfairly imposed. But even though Hawthorne admits Virginia's "right to take the life," he also looks back with an eye to the future, seeing Brown's body in 1862 as the portent Melville introduces in 1865. "It would have been better for [Virginia], in the hour that is fast coming," Hawthorne writes, "If she could

generously have forgotten." The hanging of Old Brown is an event that, once realized, threatens to return as death itself.

Stonewall Jackson was also moved by Brown's connection to death. After testifying to the instant of death, his thoughts turn inward. The Southerner and future Confederate General is strangely affected by what he has just written, about what he has just seen, and he goes on to ruminate on death in general and the spiritual life that must follow. "I was much impressed," Jackson writes to his wife, "With the thought that before me stood a man, in the full vigor of health, who must in a few minutes be in eternity."

**III. Being impressed and other signs of conscription**

In this writing of the event, Jackson is notably moved by what he sees, affected by the confrontation with *der Tote*, the dead one who, in this religious construction, *will have* lived on. "I was much *impressed*," Jackson writes, describing for his wife the event in the passive structure in which the subject is marked upon (im*pressed*) but also drawn in. This is an act of *impressment* through which the subject is made *subject to* an-other. The passive structure of the affected note hesitates between a subject who feels and one who is made to feel, an experience of the world that comes from an outside that already exists internally. This "incisive excision," as Jean Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe call it (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 198), is evident in other writings about John Brown as well, John Brown's corpus, if you will. Addressing the attack on Harper's Ferry, Julia Ward Howe states that "none of us could…approve an act so revolutionary in its character…yet the great-hearted attempt *enlisted*

our sympathies very strongly" (256, emphasis added). Ward's description of enlistment, like Jackson's impression, hesitates between voluntarism (I enlist!) and a demand to serve (I was enlisted). Even Hawthorne, who declared that in Brown's case "Nobody was ever more justly hanged," witnessed himself *feeling otherwise*. Directly after his disavowal of Emerson's "gallows" statement and his assertion of an unsentimental "intellectual satisfaction" regarding Brown's death, Hawthorne admits that "my Yankee heart stirred triumphantly when I saw the use to which John Brown's fortress and prison-house has now been put…The engine-house is now a place of confinement for Rebel prisoners." Conscripted as he is by his own sense of citizenry, Hawthorne identifies with Brown himself. "What right have I to complain of any other man's foolish impulses," he asks, "when I cannot possibly control my own?" Such rhetoric indicates that the relationship to the object is not simply an act of consumption but also infringes upon the autonomy of the subject in threat of being herself consumed or over-written. Even Thoreau feels *impelled* to speak. He argues that though sympathizers "wear no crape" (115), their very thoughts are possessed by Brown and his fate. Thoreau himself resorts to a kind of automatic writing, attempting to engage rather than exorcise this spirit. "I put a piece of paper and a pencil under my pillow," he says, "and when I could not sleep, I wrote in the dark" (115). "I do not wish to force my thoughts upon you," Thoreau says of his plea, "*But I feel forced myself*" (111, emphasis added).This affective structure connects the heteronomy of historiographical discourse, the discourse *on* the silent other body (Certeau 3), to an ontology; this is not mere conquering of space, a writing on the other, but also an opening up of the self to the possibilities of being marked yourself.

The gift of death, *that he will have died for us or in my place*, carries with it the acknowledgment of a shared finitude that one can only articulate through the *figure* of death, the death of the other, of the others.[10] Jackson's impressment, Ward's enlistment**,** imply the shared condition that exists outside of and prior to any political relation, as 'He will have died for us' becomes 'as I one day will die.' Robert Pogue Harrison argues that it is in this liminal place, the link between a past and a future, in which the living exist; we are called to answer for a past and in this to prepare the way for those to come. Harrison states: "In the human realm the dead and the unborn are native allies, so much so that from their posthumous abode…the former hound the living with guilt, dread, and a sense of responsibility, obliging us…to take the unborn into our care and to keep the story going" (ix). This story, arriving from and for futures past, is narrated in the future anterior, the *will have been*. This structure does not describe a conditional or possible future, but rather a backward-glancing prognostication, what Harrison asserts as the *past*ness of the future, the continued presence of the dead that we gift to the unborn. Harrison describes a hauntology, the ethical demand of a speech *from no where/one* that both invites and resists acts of identification and appropriation, forcing us to question the autonomy, indeed the sovereignty of the subject. These statements hint at an exposedness of one body to another,

[10] In Derrida's *Gift of Death*, the philosopher draws upon the economy of sacrifice in order to understand how the individual is made responsible (or response-able), made "to respond to the other and answer for oneself before the other" (*The Gift of Death* 3) The gift of death, he argues "puts me into relation with the transcendence of the other," exposed to the gaze of God (6) which calls internally rather than externally. In the following study, I will draw out these ideas of history as a "call to explain oneself" (3) and the particular mode of this response-ability provided by the historical romance. By studying this genre, we are able to witness or testify to the ways in which these texts create community out of death, drawing on the Body that "links historicity to responsibility" (4).

possibility, through the experience of "an outside which affects from within" (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 199), of being *e*ffected through *a*ffect.

**IV. How do I speak my own death?**

The work of mourning effected by these authors and readers is not simply a discourse written on the dead, but one that *takes in* or *incorporates* the reader. These texts transformed the sometimes-ambivalent Northerners, bringing forth a group now willing to engage in armed struggle as if they were John Brown himself. Through Brown, Thoreau argues, "We aspire to be *something more*" (114, emphasis added). If John Brown's body is, as Melville wrote, the meteor of the war, it is in part because it prepares the way for war by making possible the event of one's own death. In his "Timely Reflections on War and Death" Freud noted that "no one believes in his own death." "Our own death," he says, "is indeed unimaginable" (Freud 183). John Brown is a figure that intervenes and makes articulate the connection between subject and the aporia of his own death.

One can witness this incorporation of the subject through one of the most popular John Brown texts that appeared during the Civil War. The martial anthem "John Brown's Body" carries with it the acknowledgment of shared finitude even as it seems to deny death itself. In its lyrics, the song eulogizes Brown and his work but also inscribes a substitution and a continued work in death.

> Oh, John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the grave,
>
> While weep the sons of bondage whom he ventured all to save;

But tho' he lost his life in struggling for the slave,

His soul is marching on.

**Chorus**

Oh glory hallelujah

Glory glory hallelujah

Oh glory hallelujah

His soul is marching on.

John Brown was a hero undaunted, true and brave;

Kansas knew his valor when he fought her rights to save;

And now tho' the grass grows green above his grave,

His soul is marching on.

He captured Harpers Ferry, with his nineteen men so few,

And he frighten'd "Old Virginny" 'till she trembled thro' and thro';

They hung him for a traitor, themselves a traitor crew,

But his soul is marching on.

John Brown was John the Baptist for the Christ we are to see

Christ who of the bondman shall the Liberator be;

And soon throughout the sunny south, the slaves shall all be free,

For his soul is marching on.

The conflict that he heralded, he looks from heav'n to view;
On the army of the Union with its flag red, white and blue,
And heaven shall ring with anthems o'er the deeds they mean to do,
For his soul is marching on.

O soldiers of freedom, then strike while strike you may
The death blow of oppression in a better time and way;
For the dawn of old John Brown has brighten'd into day,
And his soul is marching on.

The song, sung lustily by Union troops on the march and headed into battle, called forth men to action by reminding them of what and who lies "a moulderin' in the grave" and still manages to go "marchin' on." The men sing that John Brown's work continues, that although it is done by other hands, it is possessed by the same spirit. Brown's time has not ceased but rather, because of his death, matured, "brighten'd into day." In the full light of day, we see John Brown as another John, John the Baptist, but we also see Brown the insurrectionist coming again, being transformed into Christ "who of the bondsman shall the Liberator be."

The lyrics thus echo the hagiographies written by Brown's supporters, and the original lyrics and melody, a Methodist hymn (Browne 142), reflect the religious tone of this prose as well.

Say brothers, will you meet us?

Say brothers, will you meet us?

Say brothers, will you meet us?

On Canaan's happy shore?

Glory, glory hallelujah!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

For ever, evermore!

This religious investment represents the transformation from individual to plural, a process of communal identification that transfigures the many into one or reveals the multiplicity that the "one" occults in the assertion of its autonomy. The proper name John Brown replaces the address "Say, brothers" in the original verse (Say, brothers will you meet us?), an act of communion that unites the community in the figure of Brown, in his death, in his continued life (in them). As a rallying cry and an apologia for the war, Brown mediates between powerful and troublesome bodies. He asks the reader to remember the white victim of white aggression, a strategy of identification that re-places the (black) body at the heart of the dispute. John Brown fought for the slave; John Brown's body asks that you fight for it (the mediating figure), and in turn, for yourself. But the song also reminds the *soul*-dier, the *soul* that goes marching on, that it is *he* who goes marching on *into* death, and, perhaps, as a martial anthem, *into the face of death itself*. In this transubstantiation in which brothers, the Union soldiers, become John Brown, the present

disappears with the subject and we are left, instead, with a future that projects. This responsibility is revealed as a response-ability as the guilt that hounds the living, a call from no place that is at the same time "my" place. The voluntaristic, affiliative act of political identification is in fact produced by a *conscription* of feeling. This affective structure, as Mikkail Borch-Jacobsen points out, "defines the primal authority as 'ethical,' 'moral' authority and not as political authority" (30) as the feeling of guilt is not about social anxiety but submitting to an internal authority. A 'me that is not me and yet is still me.'

This progression is aped by the evolution of the John Brown song itself, in that it is only after Ward hears soldiers singing themselves into John Brown's body that she rewrites the song as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," transforming John Brown into the nation itself. In her verses, Howe transforms Brown's body into the Lord himself who calls upon his citizen to respond:

> Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
> He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
> He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
> His truth is marching on.
>
> **Chorus**
>
> Glory, glory, hallelujah!
> Glory, glory, hallelujah!
> Glory, glory, hallelujah!
> His truth is marching on

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my condemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with His heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat:
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave,

He is wisdom to the mighty, He is succour to the brave,

So the world shall be His footstool, and the soul of Time His slave,

Our God is marching on.

Howe maintains the same structure and melody as the Brown song, but God notably replaces Brown as the celebrant[11] at the center of the work and it is God's truth now, instead of Brown's soul, that is marching on. God, like Brown, makes possible the violence of the war because it is He who has "loosed the fateful lighting," ripping through the sky like a meteor with "His terrible swift sword." This is a sword notably borne by Brown himself as he wrote in a letter from jail, "Christ the great Captain of *liberty*...who began his mission, as foretold of him…*saw fit* to take from me a sword of steel after I had carried it for a time" ("Letters" 93).[12] But even as the song seems to make the same move from Brown to Christ as do writers like Emerson and Thoreau, it complicates this substitution by triangulating the relationship with an "I" who testifies to God/Brown's work. "*Mine* eyes have seen the glory," "*I* have seen Him," "*I* can read," the voice insists in an open first person that takes in the reader with its insistence on "*Our* God." The penultimate verse declares that Christ "transfigures you and me," and that "As He died to make

[11] Celebrant here is meant to evoke celebration as ritual, specifically as the word references the person who officiates the Eucharist ("Celebrant"). Christians who partake in this rite consume the body and blood of Christ which functions to simultaneously commemorate a past event (the Last Supper) while consolidating and testifying to a community (of the body with the Lord, of the body with/of the Church). In my argument, the cathected dead body (Brown in this case) becomes a similar site of consumption, one that incorporates the consumer into a larger body or community.

[12] This "sword" has a more literal interpretation as well. One of Brown's prisoners at Harpers Ferry was Colonel Lewis Washington, George Washington's great grand-nephew, who owned the sword presented to Washington by Frederick the Great. Many of the accounts of the raid have Brown carrying this relic, connecting him again to the national heritage.

men holy, let us die to make men free." In these verses, *you* and *I* become the objects to be impressed upon, we are enlisted by the guilt felt over the suffering of one who stood in our place and so we recognize, in the face of death, our own shared finitude. The political demand of the patriotic anthem arrives from the affective demand of the dead Father, the audience drawn in as actors through the debt that is owed to the dead. "So *your* future veils its face," Melville's poem declares, confusing the reader with the Shenandoah Valley, itself hidden by the line break. The poet confuses the possessive pronoun and "Shenandoah!" becomes alternately the reader's own cry of lament or invocation. In conjuring this "aspect of war," the reader can ask: what is owed to the dead in that valley?

Melville's mournful project in his *Battle-Pieces* may be considered a failure. The book did not sell in large numbers and the critical reviews were, if not negative, nonplussed.[13] In his *Atlantic Monthly* review, William Dean Howells famously declared that Melville's poems were too *original*, that they had lost any genuine historical reference, any claim to the *actual* dead, and have consequently lost the ability to incorporate the reader into its memorial verses. "Mr. Melville's work," Howells writes, "possesses the negative virtues of originality in such degree that it …reminds you…of no life you have ever known." "Is it possible," he asks, "…after running over all these … verses – that there has really been a great war, with battles fought by men and bewailed by women?" (Howells 252). Melville's aestheticized war is unrecognizable, overly mediated by an insistent author that distances the reader from the event instead of making it present. The conjure work fails and Melville's pieces have a feeling of "remoteness" (252) that

[13] Robert Scholnick notes that there were only 13 reviews of the work and only 486 of the 1,260 printed copies had been sold by February, 1868. It was at that time that Harper's wrote to Melville that, having guaranteed the publication expenses, he owed them $338.93 (422).

renders the bodies in his sketches "impalpable" (253). Melville's "originality," his "skill," instead foregrounds the creative work of the historian, what *originates* in Melville himself, the interpretive or manipulative work of the artist upon the canvas. His paintings offer up the artist for consumption instead of the object of his art. "Is it only that Mr. Melville's inner consciousness has been perturbed," Howells asks, finding only singular and not communal experience in the text. Instead of witnessing and being affected by the event itself, the reader witnesses the inscription of the poet himself, Melville's own incorporation and personal mourning. Melville's body, at least for audiences in 1866, is not an object that can be shared and so the reader is distanced from the dead and made to realize the intervening voice of the poet himself. Howells objects that it is not Brown who testifies, the flesh of the words, but the rather Melville, the writer, who crafts the story out of "not words and blood, but words alone?" (252). "There is not much of John Brown in this," Howells says of "The Portent," "But…a good deal of Mr. Melville's method" (252). Instead of the conciliatory mourning Melville imagines in his "Supplement," his readers find instead a phantasmagoria of mourning, a drawing back of the veil that foregrounds the production of affect through writing, and that in doing so it loses the magic, the affective potential of the event. Melville "fails to move us," Howells claims (252), or, as another review criticized, "[Melville's originality] removes him from the sympathies of a large class of readers" (quoted in Scholnick 425).

These objections highlight and yet refuse to address how Melville's imposition testifies to another event, the event of incorporation itself. This second event revises the heteronomy of prophecy, written on Brown's body in the opening poem. What appears at first to be a proleptic voice, one that foretells the future, is complicated by the analeptic position of the author, who

selects from the past an event to tell his story. The meteor (the prophecy that functions as history and as history's effects) is revealed as a participatory construct, a prophecy that is not given but created in the act of interpretation and ritually recreated in the act of consumption. The meteor is not simply John Brown but Melville as well.[14] It this recognition, the recognition of the chronicler's voice, that Walt Whitman offers in his own record of John Brown's meteoric death. In "Year of the Meteors," the poet works through a testimony of the event only to find his own writing and thus his own death in the end. "As I flit through you hastily," the poet asks, "soon to fall and be gone, what is this book,/What am I myself but one of your meteors?" In Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the dead cease to be separated from the reader both spatially and temporally as the poet calls them forth in the blade of grass, the inspiration/transpiration of dead young men,

[14] Maurice Lee argues that Melville's *Battle-Pieces* "subversively quarrels with presumptuous notions of American destiny" (1125), that Melville's view of the recent past is more troubled than those pieces (he cites "Battle Hymn of the Republic" specifically) that display a dogmatic confidence in the Union's divine/divinely guided victory. Lee argues that Melville is more uncertain about the War (its causes and effects) and the contemporaneous criticism of his poems indicates the adherence of the general public to "the self fulfilling logic of American providence" described by Sacvan Bercovitch in *Rites of Assent*(Lee n. 11)(Lee n. 11) . My argument is not that Melville supports this providential attitude, but rather that the critics like Howells fail to acknowledge the intermediary work of the historian or author at work in all texts, a "providential attitude" that inheres to the work of history itself. It is my argument that Howells' complaint is that Melville speaks instead of being spoken through, as a true prophet. While several critical reviews focus on Melville's political views (*The Independent*'s review on January 10, 1867, for instance, condemned Melville's prose "Supplement" and the poet himself as "mischievous" (quoted in Scholnick 430), Howells's column focuses instead on the error in *affect*. Melville's failure is one of historiographical posture (whether intentional, as a disturbing or subversive 'distancing,' or, as Howells seems to imply, an unintentional consequence of Melville's style), his inability to remove his own voice, to speak "in the third person" as Certeau describes it, and so give us the body or bodies (within the text and of the text itself) in which to invest the libidinal energy of mourning. Because of this, Melville's role in the translation (and transmission) of prophecy is evident to critical readers, thus mediating and therefore dampening the testimony of the dead.

women, and the children “taken soon out of their mothers’ laps” (Whitman). These dead, for Whitman – including Whitman – *are* the American subject.

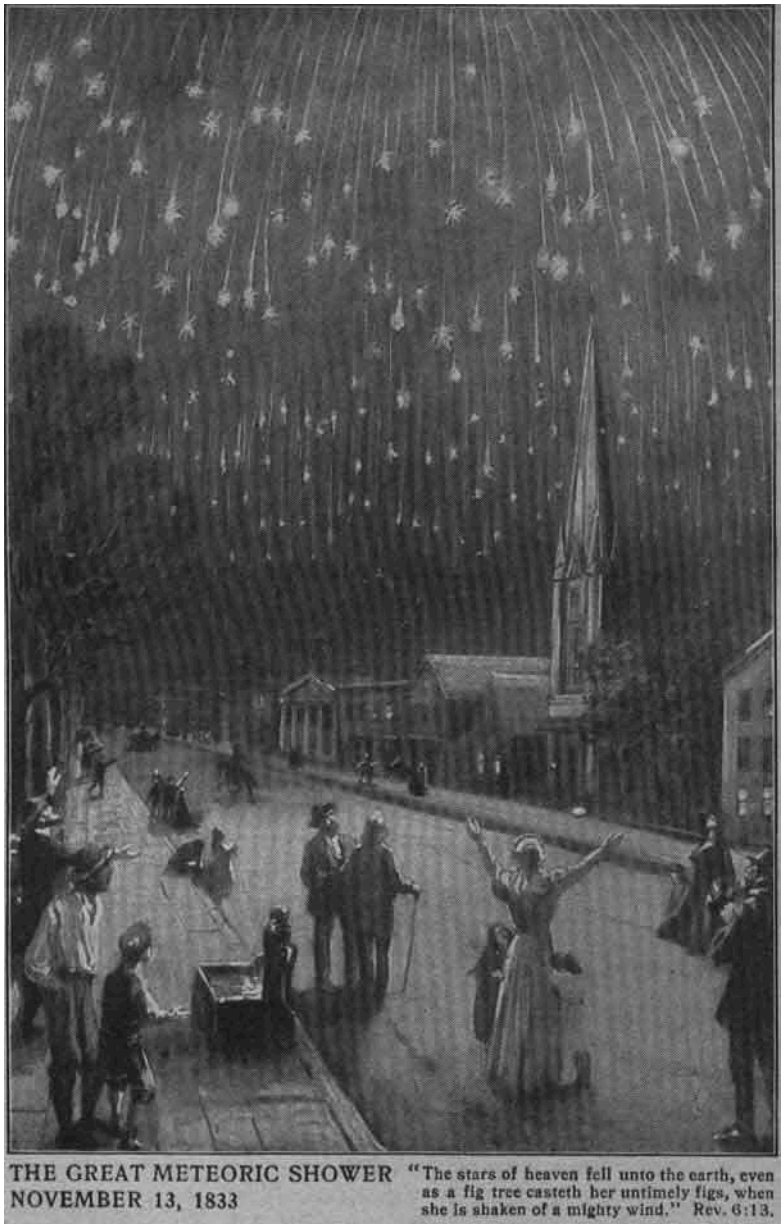


**Fig. 1. Image printed in W.A. Spicer's *Our Day in the Light of Prophecy***

## Chapter One:
## Books Buried in the Earth:
## The *Book of Mormon*, Revelation, and the American Historical Romance

> "I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it up: and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations and tongues, and kings.
> -Revelation 10:9-11

> "There were four major people who abridged the Book of Mormon. They were all qualified to address the future because they had seen it."
> -Monte S. Nyman, *I, Nephi, Wrote this Record*

### I. The sky falls over Zion

In the very early morning of November 13, 1833 the sky came crashing down. A meteor shower lit up the midnight sky, heavenly bodies falling in such large numbers that night became day and clocks useless.[1] Many of the witnesses thought the spectacle presaged the end of time; some thought it was the apocalypse itself and fell to their knees in penitence, while others declared it to be a sure sign of God's anger and could only wait anxiously for the "fearful calamities [that] would probably speedily follow" (Rogers). The itinerant preacher Samuel

[1] In her *Victorian Astronomy* Agnes Clerke estimated that at least 240,000 meteors fell during the nine-hour shower (376) In his testimony of the event, Elder Samuel Rogers recalls someone looking out the window and declaring it "almost broad daylight. 'That can not be,' another answered, 'For it is scarcely three o'clock.' 'I can't help what the clock says,' replied the first speaker, 'my eyes can not deceive me; it is almost broad daylight." This story captures not only the confusion of the moment but also the conflict between the overlying narrative of time (the clock that marches forward at a uniform pace and marks an objective time) and the experience of or testimony to time (the lived experience and the authority of the witness). This event is particularly interesting in light of the theory that this chapter will lay out because of its assertion of an affective narrative of time over a scientific or objective/dehumanized standard of time.

Rogers remembers, "One old lady was emphatic in the statement that it was certainly a 'token of some sign.'…Some men declared that they saw great balls of fire…Others thought they saw these great balls of fire bursting among the tree-tops." It was a sign. Or perhaps a burning bush. God was speaking and the world was ending; one need only read the sky through the Text. These witnesses, Rogers declares, all "undertook to prove out of the Scriptures that this was one of the signs of the coming Son of Man." But despite cries that "the world is surely coming to an end" (Rogers), the witnesses survived to see the event itself memorialized in Newspapers as "The Night The Stars Fell," aestheticized in poetry and painting, and preserved in autobiographies and chronicles of the period. The event, a trauma in search of signs, transforms into a text, written and circulated for the consumption of a wide audience. The event, thus mediated by the texts, becomes raw material for the work of historiography, the reconciliation "between the real and discourse" (Certeau *Writing* xxvii) that makes the experience palatable for its reader. In one of the images depicting the shower that circulated in W.A. Spicer's *Our Day in the Light of Prophecy* (Fig. 1), the event is paired with a quotation from the book of Revelation. It reads: "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind" (92). The stars, the pairing implies, feed the earth in their falling, planting the seed that would bear the American future. The sign, then, points not to the sky but to the earth, the final resting place of these heavenly bodies, these "untimely figs," that sow the future with their deaths.[2]

[2] I am indebted to Martin Kevorkian for pointing out this relationship between the text, the image, and the discourse of the current study.

That night, the stars fell over a camp of Mormon refugees on the banks of the Missouri River. The Saints came to Missouri by way of revelation, discovering through their prophet that the city and surrounds of Independence were the former and future site of Zion, "the center place" of the second coming (J. Smith *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.* ). There they were to build up the City of God, preparing the way for Christ's return to Earth at the place of man's beginning. Zion, the prophet revealed, was also the site of the Garden of Eden.[3] But the Mormons in Zion lived among a hostile population of frontier settlers, where distrust was fomented by religious difference and aggravated by the political power of the Mormon voting bloc (Bushman "Mormon Persecutions" 14, 8-20). Smith's prophecy proclaimed that in Jackson the Saints should "obtain [land] for an everlasting inheritance" and the Gentile settlers were made nervous by these declarations of an "inheritance" and resentful of claims to their land.[4] In the late fall of 1833, this strife erupted as mob violence against Mormon person and property, and the settlers drove the Saints from city and county. The Mormons fled to the river, transforming the "wilderness," as the *History of the Church* tells, first into a "camp meeting" and then into "a village of wigwams" (437), transformations that reflected

[3] Bruce Van Orden, an Associate Professor of Church History at Brigham Young University, points out that the Church lacks primary evidence for this assertion, i.e. the "holographic writing" of Smith himself in his journal. (The term "holographic writing" is used by Jessee to describe Smith's journal entries written in his own hand and unmediated by posthumous editors.) But Van Orden argues that this location of Eden is correct, citing the language in Revelation 57 in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as well as statements by contemporaneous Church elders Brigham Young and Heber Kimball. Young testified in 1857 that "Joseph the Prophet told me that the garden of Eden was in Jackson [County] Missouri" (quoted in (Van Orden))

[4] "Gentile" is the Mormon term for the white Christian population, the population from which they emerged and yet from which their religion made them distinct. The use of the term "gentile" to describe the non-Mormon population emphasizes the filial transformation that accompanied conversion, the conversion into an older, native community that will be discussed in this chapter.

the history of the Church itself, first as a part of evangelical revivalism and then as an indigenous movement.[5] It is at this encampment, on the edge of an apocalyptic city, that the Saints witnessed the event. Parley Pratt writes:

> We were called up by the cry of signs in the heavens. We arose, and to our great astonishment all the firmament seemed enveloped in splendid fireworks, as if every star in the broad expanse had been hurled from its course and sent lawless through the wilds of ether. Thousands of bright meteors were shooting through space in every direction, with long trains of light following in their course…Every heart was filled with joy at this majestic display of signs and wonders, showing the near approach of the coming of the Son of God. (110)

The Mormons, with their belief in the continued active presence of God in the material world, their literalist understanding of sacred texts and doctrine of continued and personal revelation of the word of God, *rejoice* as the sky falls (Shipps 33, 36-39) (Underwood) (217). Pratt immediately understands the meteors as "signs," joyful signs in a troubling time. This "majestic display of signs and wonders" testifies to an encroaching deadline, an end that is in fact a return, as the Mormons themselves have returned, to Zion. This is a future foretold, already inscribed in the sacred history of the world. It is this mixture of prophecy and history that has brought them to Missouri, back to Eden; their millenarian doctrine put them at the site of the beginning, which is also, as the falling stars confirm, the end.

[5] In Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* (rev.1848) defines "wigwam" as "an Indian cabin or hut, so called in *America*" (1137, emphasis in original).

One may be tempted to read the popular end time fantasies attached to these "readings' by Mormon and Gentile alike as the "human instinct to purge by fire" the purifying narrative that clears away the past (Lewis 14). This period has been famously interpreted as a search for the American Adam, born into a new world cleared of the past. Critic RWB Lewis argued that the past was a burden to the newly-formed nation, one that impeded the "creative task at hand," that of cementing new national bonds and of transforming colonial communities into one independent nation state (13). But as the Mormon position indicates, these millenarian scenarios may instead be understood as an embrace of this very past as it offers a more profound understanding of the current period and its fate through the projection of sacred history. Lewis juxtaposed those he called "believers in the future" with the burden of pre-revolutionary history (13), but the Mormons were only one group among many in the Americas that found history to be fecund raw material for narrating the future of their new communities. The prophetic history triangulated the contemporary position, lent it stability by its presentation of a past and a future; the chronology of a foretold, sacred history, a master sign, stabilized the uncertainties that could accompany the rupture implied in revolution. The Mormons, and many of their fellow Americans, were attempting to establish their position in respect to the biblical "fullness of time," the ultimate chronological marker. The failure of the secular historian, rebuked by a millennialist as one with the atheist and infidel (Shimeall), is that he simply fails to read history through the Text. When science, this author declares, addressing his antiquarian foes, "is relied on as a guide in our search of truth to the *exclusion* of REVELATION, [it] serves but to furnish evidence of the lamentable defectibility of *human reason*" (xviii, emphasis in original). This rejection of the disinterested nature of the antiquarian (Phillips 438), is also an argument for the given sacred

text, the *divine* history, that has already been written, been *spoken through* and given *place* to man.

In his "Notes on Comparative American Literary History," John McCormick remarks that "The United States has been interpreted as a country without a pre-history," because the event of its creation occurred within "a given moment in *recorded* history" (171, emphasis mine). The birth of the nation irrupted onto the already written page, suffering the consequence that 'a society born in a certain moment of history comes to find itself outside history;…lacks any deep rooted consciousness of history'" (171). The new nations that emerged in North and South America may not only be produced by print culture, as Benedict Anderson has claimed in his *Imagined Communities*, but also victims of the same. These nations, McCormick's statement implies, faced strong challenges to their communities from their emergence under the documenting eye of print culture. They were new, and as colonizers-turned citizens they held only tenuous historical claims to the land they inhabited. Americans needed to identify themselves as more than simply displaced Europeans, but the recorded history of their colonial experience stood in the way of this project.[6] While critics such as Lewis have read the answers to this challenge as a rejection or purgation of the past, it is my goal in this study to show how several authors met this challenge by embracing and affectively writing over pre-revolutionary history in a manner that subverted the dislocation implied by revolution and imposed upon the

[6] There is, in Anderson's argument, the attendant implication that the New World itself, in its attendant new economic structures and documentary mania, was experienced as the *newness* of Europe itself (White 52), freed from older structures of authority, even before the new national structures were fully developed. New world nationalism, then, arises without the burden of competing historical structures. Instead it is the expression of an ever-present modernity that contributes to the famous continental theorist's claim that America has no history (Baudrillard 7).

written record an amnesia at the moment of this rupture. The American Adam, these authors argue, is not a *new* creation. The American Adam, as the Mormon revelation of Zion implied and the texts of this study will argue, has been here all along.

In this embrace of history and historiography, the revolutionary work of protest, "a prolonged protest against the dominion of antiquity in every form whatsoever" as one newspaper called it in 1842 (quoted in Lewis 159), gives way to the search for origins, the sentimental education of history effected by the hereditary logic of a new family bond. If, in the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the colonial subjects divorced themselves from their parents, denying their filial loyalties, then those born into this post-colonial situation were tasked with inventing a history for this family romance that would encourage stability over rupture, that would allow for natural and nativist claims to the land that would strengthen the political identification of the state. The Mormon millennial view of the American landscape is indicative of this reconsideration of history, and the faithful Saints reading signs in the sky over Missouri are engaging not only with augurs of an end but a restoration as well. In her study of this period in the United States, Joyce Appleby declares that because this generation of North Americans was "Never forced, like their parents, to revoke an earlier loyalty to Great Britain…[they] were much freer to imagine what the United States might become" (3). But in order to understand who they might become, these second-generation Americans needed to uncover who they *were*. These early nationalists turned to the past to find stability for present condition and their vision of the future, finding there the "foundational fictions" as Doris Sommer termed them, that laid the groundwork for a distinct national culture. No longer faced with the need to justify the revolutions themselves, these citizens instead faced the task of establishing a national community

that transcended the political identification of the independence period, one that gave foundation to the political community in an indigenous *feeling* for the state**.** This "emotional tie" is an affective assent prior to or distinct from the conscious solidarity described by theorists of nationalism. I will argue that North and South Americans during their respective periods of national development accomplished this sentimental consolidation by writing history, more specifically by *romancing* history, creating an affective bond between the present community and an imagined past through the consuming, libidinal excitement of the national romance. In this way the historical romances of the early national period used the documentary and circulatory functions of print culture that threatened to expose their novelty (implicating not only their cultural newness but also their history as fictional prose as well) in order to create a new shared cultural heritage; the books themselves not only pretended to contain but themselves functioned as the material foundation for a new cultural history. Through the mediatory figure of the book, these readers attached themselves to the figures of their past. Through the identifying work of their sentimental journeys, the protagonists' loves, struggles and, most importantly for the present study, their deaths, these novels interpolate their readers as the prophetic result of their narratives. In these invented pasts, writers discovered a cultural and even familial inheritance that superseded, in large part because they anteceded, those recent political claims of revolution and independence. The reader's political existence is foretold in the social collectivity of the past. All that was needed was a sacred historian, the translator of God's word, a prophet to show them the way.

In the early morning of November 13th, the Mormon faithful woke Joseph Smith, their prophet, so that he could interpret these signs in the sky. Just three years after organizing the

Church of Christ (later the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), three years after publishing its central work *The Book of Mormon*, Smith presided over a large congregation of Saints in Ohio, traveled frequently to groups of faithful in Canada and New York, and oversaw the settling of Zion from a distance. He was concerned about his followers in Jackson County, but had not heard of their most recent troubles when he witnessed the same meteor shower as the refugees in Missouri. He wrote in his journal:

> "I arrose and beheld to my great Joy the stars fall from heaven yea they fell like hail stones a litteral fulfillment of the word of God as recorded in the holy scriptures and a sure sign that the coming of Christ is close at hand Oh how marvelous are they works Oh Lord and I thank thee for thy me[r]cy unto me thy servent Oh Lord save me in thy kingdom for Christ sake Amen" ([sic] Jessee 11)

Like those faithful on the banks of the Missouri River, Smith does not see the event as a cause for panic but rather an occasion for joy, as the falling stars confirm the veracity of the text, offering "a litteral fulfillment of the word of God as recorded in the holy scriptures." What makes Smith's faith in the Text distinct from non-Mormon contemporaneous millenarian views is that these "holy scriptures" include his own productions,[7] the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, the texts later compiled as *The Pearl of Great Price* and his inspired re-translation of the Bible. For Smith and his followers, the "holy scriptures" were distinctly American in their setting, preservation, discovery, translation and reproduction. The fulfillment of the word of God and thus the true ability to understand these signs in the sky could only be done in the context of

[7] As either the author or translator. See section II for discussion of method regarding these texts and the question of their authorship.

re-placing the Americas at the center of prophetic discourse, of understanding the land as unique in its ability to realize ancient prophecy. The Mormon scriptures transformed a universal Christian eschatology into a uniquely American phenomenon, bestowing upon the land a connection to a sacred history that preceded and therefore supplanted its secular history of conquest, colonialism, and political revolution. The Americas, in this structure, not only gained a stronghold within a recognizable "recorded history" but also resided at its center, rendering the Old World peripheral or perhaps even outside of this chronology. In this restructured filial heritage, the American citizen can imagine his or her heritage not as a direct line from Europe but rather, as one Mormon settler in Jackson County did, as an indigenous connection to the American landscape and "our first parents in the garden of Eden" (Van Orden).

The following study aims to show how historical fiction, in both North and South America, transformed the socially dominant European American into an indigenous population. As Ed White has argued, North America (and by the extension of this argument, South America as well) "first appeared as the 'imagined community' of the Native American Other" (51), and it was the task of these writers to transform this otherness into an intimate identification for the ruling creole (*criollo*) population.[8] These texts accomplished this transformation by bequeathing an affective, filial heritage that re-placed the rupture of revolution with a stable, native claim to the land. These romances re-wrote history as revelation, foreseeing contemporary conditions in the colonial past and therefore asserting a natural chronological progression or historical fate instead of manufactured resistance and revolutionary breach. European conquering forces, both

[8] This term is used to designate, in Anderson's words, a "person of (at least theoretically) pure European descent but born in the Americas" (47 n.1).

religious and secular, had seen the Americas as a space in which prophecies would be realized.[9] In the emerging national literature under investigation here writers exploited the trope of a prophetic landscape, using this same messianic trope to create a "useable past" for defining a contemporary citizen (Brooks), a citizen whose definition remained otherwise troubled by a social and racial structure that remained in large part unchanged from the colonial period. Instead of a continuity of colonial culture, these writers desired "to fertilize the present" with a new vision of the past (337), one that included the affective tenants of independent America and so displaced the moment of its birth into a distant history while simultaneously erasing the idea of colonization as foreign occupation. These creole writers, born in the New World, projected their own nativist experience backwards onto their colonial predecessors. In the process of revealing their contemporary political affiliation as an historical, filial inheritance, these romances *wrote upon and wrote over* the troublesome bodies that threatened to expose their invasive history. In the arguments that follow, I not only outline how historical romances created affective, native ties to the Americas for their white postcolonial readers, but also how this same structure disavowed or rendered impossible a contemporary Native American identity. In sentimental processes that mirrored contemporary political policy, these romances pushed back, both geographically and temporally, the possibility of Amerindian subjectivity in the new nations.

While this study is American in scope because of the particular challenges faced by these emerging nations in attempting to define themselves, I hope in the process to show how the strategies used by these texts participate in the psychic life of communities in general: that the

[9] Studies of prophetic rhetoric in conquest and settlement include Cañizares-Esguerra, Kadir, and Miller. (*Columbus*)

libidinal structures evoked by these romances are in part characteristic of how all communities come together. In this way, the investigation of *nations* and *nationalisms* in this study is not an argument about the nation as a distinct community formation but rather uses this form, as it emerges in the New World in the nineteenth century, as a key to understanding general social collectivity. This study, then, engages with Debray's assertion that the nation is both historically determined but also invariable (2) as an expression of the primary determinants of identification and cultural organization.

The focus of this study is the narratives through which these determinants emerge, and in particular the use of imaginary literature in delimitating a community in time and space. All community bonds are communicated by and understood through narrative and, as Freud has famously demonstrated, even the single family unit retains traces of a narrative that makes possible its coming together. These particular historical romances are useful in understanding community bonds because the texts both participate in forming and respond to the ongoing needs of their communities through a dominant material medium, a mechanics of production and reproduction that influences their constitutive narrative strategies. What makes the literary genre of the novel unique, as Walter Benjamin has pointed out, is its development *after* the invention of the press (83-84). The circulation not only of narrative, but also its material bounds therefore inheres to the process of collective identity that these texts engender and the modes of consumption and identification detailed in the argument that follows cannot be separated from the material exchange relations that gird the capitalist print market. These print-based communities in the Americas, developed in plain view of an established print culture (its gaze already upon the land and its subjects) are helpful in studying the materialism of community

formation because they, by their scriptive nature, depended upon the rendering of traces of the past as material objects in the present. These textual artifacts cannot but work against the assumption that history and community are natural constructs (a procession of events external to the position of the observer, a gathering of *volk*) exterior to the documentary process (Ricœur) (in footnote – see especially pages); these romances dare to rework these sacred categories by producing new narratives, attaching their readers to history and land through the effects of the texts themselves. Reading, in this structure, is "a mass ceremony" (Anderson 35, Brennan 52), a ritual of consumption that simultaneously and reciprocally establishes a national character and a national literature. The narrative strategies of the romances in this study are both effected and made manifest by the medium of their deployment and so the texts also function as insights into the mechanics that support the construction of the contemporary nation-state as well as the emotive and fetishistic structures that girds general human social collectives.

The following study does not take as its aim American religious history or sacred texts per se, but the *Book of Mormon*, and the formation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are an efficient and effective introduction to the cultural work of historical romance as it acts upon and in turn enacts an affective community, one whose members share a pre-political "emotional tie," as Freud terms it. Because the *Book of Mormon* and the history of the early church present us with a smaller collectivity in the process of formation, I offer it as a way to think through how the cultural work of the text produces community in a smaller context than the national stage. In joining this religious text and community together with a fictional genre, I do not mean to imply, nor will I argue, that the text itself is false or, in Platonic terms, that it lies. But while it is not the goal of this study to redefine the *Book of Mormon* (1830) as a fictional

text, its structure and narrative, as a prophetic and mournful history, a translation, and an archive of the past and its scriptural traces, aligns it with the narrative strategies of the historical romances that reside at the heart of this study. This tripartite structure of prophecy, translation and preservation is the organizing trope of this study and *The Book of Mormon* is therefore a useful introductory text through which to condense the theoretical reach of the individual chapters that follow. The *Book of Mormon* is also exemplary of what I will argue to be the materialist foundation of the psychic life of communities in the age of print. Benedict Anderson has famously argued for the foundational role of print culture in the formation of nations, defined in his terms as imagined communities. Shared cultural texts become the means of imagining the space of the nation, providing for the "rich legacy of memories" and producing the "present-day consent" that Renan argues to be the co-creation of nation and citizen (19). Renan describes this consent as an expression of desire "to continue a common life" (19), but, as I will show, this desire itself stems from a pre-political primary desire that moves between pleasure and death, identity and disavowal. This pre-political structure of desire is mediated by the material of the text. National narratives, as the mode of communicating this "social capital" (Renan 19), thus become part of a transformative material transaction. Here, print culture functions as a scriptural economy, one that transforms the book into a fetish object (both in terms of a figure of exchange and as access to the sacred), the material location of shared desires that's significance exceeds (and yet relies upon) its material bounds. This excess is expressed in relation to its reader, in the reader's libidinal cathexis of the text as an object of desire, shared with an unknown number of fellow readers. This libidinal energy is in turn expressed through the affective and somatic transformations it effects. The reader sighs and sheds tears, loves and mourns, through the text.

The recognition and consent described by Renan is not necessarily voluntaristic but, as I will argue, a somatic conscription, a *feeling with* the characters in the novel. This interaction, between the body of the text and the body of the reader, form the affective bonds of citizenship that remains the goal of national literature.

**II. The Scryptural Economy**

Fawn Brodie opens her famous biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History* with a funeral sermon and a historical debate. After quoting Joseph Smith's sermon from which she garnered the title of her study, Brodie details the various and wide-ranging conclusions of Smith biographies written thus far, evidence, she offers, that perhaps Smith's declaration that "No man knows my history," was actually more of a prophecy. "The reason for these disparate opinions," she writes, "is by no means lack of biographical data, for Joseph Smith dared to found a new religion in the age of printing. When he said 'Thus saith the Lord!' the words were copied down by secretaries and congealed forever into print" (vii). Brodie goes on to locate the difficulty of understanding Smith's character (in the face of overwhelming documentation) in the form and purpose of his writing. "His story," she concludes, regarding his six-volume autobiography, "is the antithesis of confession," neither singular nor private. His autobiography is the official history of the church; it is not a personal document but a communal one. This official history of an institution is an "I" that is at the same time a "we." Even in its production (Smith rarely wrote for himself, choosing instead to dictate or defer to secretaries), the body of and behind the text is in fact multiple. Instead of revealing the object of its study, the individual, Smith's autobiography presents an individual identified completely with, and thus consumed by,

the larger community of the church. The reverse also seems to be true. In the autobiography of its founder and most important prophet, the community of the LDS Church is contained within, consumed in its turn by the "I" of Smith's writing. Brodie's introductory analysis indicates that Smith's church was not only a daring creation in the age of the (skeptical) press, but also that the publication and circulation of its own narratives actually formed the foundation for Church identification. The community, moving between the "I" and "we" was made possible, given form by this very "age of printing."

The identificatory strategies of Smith's daring work is easily compared to Benedict Anderson's famous argument regarding the foundational work of print communities in *Imagined Communities*. In this study, first published in 1983, Anderson argues that much of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century struggles for national recognition were effects of the growth of national print cultures. The circulation of texts allowed readers to locate an idea of their community in time and space. These texts constructed the imagined borders of the nation, giving it a sense of enclosed space that is bounded both physically and temporally. These borders made the space imaginable and, by its limitation in time, its history inscribable. These texts also connected the population, giving them an experience of "simultaneity," a consumption in kind that connected readers across the geographic expanse of their community (35). Writing, then, as Michel de Certeau argues, "must be a practice, the endless production of an identity" (Certeau *Practice* 137). Certeau says that writing creates space, a bordered space upon which a product, the text, is exchanged in the consuming act, or, in Anderson's terms, the "mass ceremony" of reading (134-135). This exchange, Certeau explains, is the essence of the scriptural economy that marks the modern sociality discussed by Anderson. The double isolation Certeau sees in this

"scriptural apparatus," isolation from people and voice, is precisely the gap that creates the imaginary space upon which to project that modern community of the nation. There is no way to know fellow citizens through contact, Anderson argues, but print culture produces a space through which its scope can be imaginatively contained. The nation is *imagined* through the text "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 6).

Confronted with the challenge of creating a space for imagining community, the Mormons "dared" to write. The early Mormons were, and the LDS Church remains to this day, consummate record keepers. From documenting Church activities, to community newspapers tracking both local and global verifications of Mormon doctrine, to personal histories submitted to Books of Remembrance,[10] the Mormon community in both its institutional and personal life produced and preserved great quantities of texts. This profusion of textual production can be seen even in the daily journaling of its members. Many prominent early Mormons documented and published the stories of their daily lives (such as the work by Parley Pratt that introduced this chapter), but this documentary mania carried over into the general populace as well. In his report

[10] The Books of Remembrance contain personal histories submitted and kept by the Church (Bitton 2). According to the Book of Moses (an inspired gospel separate from the *Book of Mormon* and dictated by Joseph Smith in 1830), Adam kept a book that documented his descendents and included a genealogy. Such books were kept by the faithful throughout time (the *Book of Mormon* can be read as such a book, as I will argue in this chapter) for the purposes of final judgment of the dead (*Doctrine and Covenants* 128:7). The *Doctrine and Covenants* 85:9 reads that "And all they who are not found written in the book of remembrance shall find none inheritance in that day, but they shall be cut asunder, and their portion shall be appointed them among unbelievers, where are wailing and gnashing of teeth." Salvation itself is thus a *textual* production.

on Mormon diaries and autobiographies, Davis Bitton writes that "It is hard to believe that any group of comparable size…has been so relentless as the Mormons in writing diaries and autobiographies," particularly in the nineteenth century (1). The report then goes on to document *only* those known, published material in public collections, *excluding* personal histories submitted to and kept by the Church; it is over a thousand pages long. One of the largest categories of autobiographical writing detailed by the report is the missionary diary (5). These journals chronicled the experience of the Mormon missionaries and helped in part to understand and track communication between church branches, as missions were often structured as trips to other Mormon enclaves (6). The Mormon Church was spread out over a great deal of the country and these travels, and the diaries that documented them, thus functioned to undermine potentially divisive geographical distinctions by privileging a unified community. These texts, according to Certeau's economy, create a space, a page that "delimits a place of production for the subject" (134). The proselytizing "we" included these distant regions in their distinction from the Gentile or heathen "them," all while leaving, through the text, a trace upon the land. Publishing and circulating the diaries confirmed this inclusion and sense of community for the reader who was not necessarily herself one of these travelers.

The Church did not rely solely on private writings to maintain its community across great distances but rather supplemented this journaling by itself publishing community newspapers that communicated the work of the Church to its isolated enclaves. In England, Parley Pratt edited the *Millennial Star*, a Mormon newspaper that connected European adherents to the Saints in America through communicating, as the title page declares, "a great variety of useful information in regard to…the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and of the great work

of God in these last days; with a faithful record of the signs and judgments which are beginning to be shown forth in the heavens and in the earth." Its regular features included selections from the *Book of Mormon*, "News from the Saints in America," and "Signs of the Times," all articles that gathered the community under the aegis of shared texts and created for the diaspora the "existential experience" of community (White 53). Reading, particularly for Anderson the reading of regional newspapers, is a shared private experience in which the reader is aware "that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by … others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion" (35). Anderson argues that this new sense of community, based on the commodity culture that both includes and is encouraged by the growth of print, leads to the modern understanding of the nation as a limited sovereign community that conceives of itself as "a deep horizontal comradeship" (7). This "horizontal comradeship" depends, in Anderson's structure, upon the shared foundation of the "homogeneous, empty time" of "temporal coincidence…measured by clock and calendar" (24).[11] This is marked in reading, he argues, by "the essential connection" among readers created by "the date at the top of the newspaper," the organizing medium that lends cohesion to its narrative, a shared location in time. This, Anderson is careful to point out, is not the "simultaneity of the past and future in an instantaneous present" (24), the mark of prophecy or "Messianic time." Instead, this is the equalizing or democratizing "meanwhile" of the un-Event-ful secular or scientific experience of time (24-25). But while Anderson juxtaposes this

[11] Anderson cites Benjamin as his source for the terms "homogeneous empty time" and "messianic time." Benjamin uses both terms to juxtapose the work of history (former) and the possible work of historical materialism (latter) as a revolutionary irruption that breaks the steady progress of historical time.

calendrical time to the "prefiguring and fulfilment" of Messianic time, this Mormon print community, and by extension the historical romances with which it share its tropes, demonstrate the potential of a readership to consolidate through the shared consumption of revelation as well.

In the Mormon communities, their use of print to imagine their social relation was predicated upon the goal that this writing be "a faithful record of the signs," the shared material trace of a shared, prophetic history. Print culture was no afterthought in Mormon communities but itself produced by the same prophecies that guided the faithful in their daily lives. The community's foundational text, the *Book of Mormon*, is populated by New World chroniclers whose holy work is to record the visions of their leaders and the events of their history in order to pass them down in written word. The contemporary community mirrored this ancient script by connecting the holy work of the church with the work of the press. In Smith's Revelation 57, the same prophecy that reveals the location of Zion and gives instructions for its settlement, the prophet declares that one of their members "be planted in this place, and be established as a printer unto the church," while another was to serve as his editor, "to copy, and to correct, and select, that all things may be right before me" (J. Smith *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.* 216). Even Eden, the beginning and the end, was to be settled in part by a visionary press. These communities come together not through the date on the page but rather by the apocalyptic "now" that marks their place as a point of fulfillment or realization. Joseph Smith, the *Book of Mormon* and the historical romancers in this study demonstrate the continued deployment, rather than disappearance of this proleptic or anticipatory narrative, they demonstrate that the modernity of social relations as defined by the constructive work of print culture need not also entail the wholesale disregard for the sacral discourse of prior social

iterations. Broadie's insistence on the 'daring' nature of Smith's community speaks to this very contrapuntal deployment, the sacral exploitation of the presumably secular scriptural economy.

The aim of the above argument is not to put this study in a contestative position in respect to Anderson's argument, but rather to caution against the progressivist moves that he sometimes makes in separating out this messianic frame as itself lost to the past, a "dusk" in opposition to the "dawn" of print (11).[12] I would argue instead that the coincidence of a print community and prophecy is already incorporated into Anderson's study, that it can be found in the grave sign that marks the opening of his book: the figure of death rendered legible upon the material marker of the tomb. As he begins his study, Anderson stops first at the "cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers," which he sees as the most "arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism" (9). But even as he declares them to have no precedent, he also concedes that its concern with death marks nationalism's "strong affinity with religious imaginings" (10). "As this affinity is by no means fortuitous," Anderson assures us, "it may be useful to begin a consideration of the cultural roots of nationalism with death" (10). In particular, the nation accomplishes the deployment of death as a mode of transforming fatality into continuity, establishing "links between the dead and the yet unborn" (11). But while Anderson will conclude that nationalism's "new way of linking fraternity, power and time" is the flattening out of chronological experience in the "homogenous, empty time" (36), I would return again to that empty and yet powerful tomb, to its call of responsibility, that which impresses the living into its service and thus into its community. This venerative, mournful position is precisely that sacral

[12] In "Dessimination" Homi Bhabha develops a critique of this historical progressivism around Anderson's insistence that ability to imagine the nation through print is opened up by the destabilization of the sign due to the erosion of religious faith in sacred languages.

prophetic simultaneity that Anderson marks as "wholly alien to our own" (24). It is, after all, the fear that "*even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy" that requires the Messianic vision of the historical materialist in Benjamin's theses (255). And it is to the past and its dead that we owe what remains in us of this "Messianic power" (254). Robert Pogue Harrison echoes this assertion of the foundational importance of the dead and the powerful hold of the dead over the living. "Whether we are conscious of it or not," he says, "we do the will of the ancestor." We are their creation, "authored always from the start by those that came before" (ix), and it is in our encounters with their memorials, those tombs and cenotaphs, that we are heralded by the text and constituted by our consuming act of mourning.

Harrison's acknowledgement of the authority of the dead, their constitutive hold over the living, offers us an opening onto Anderson's cenotaph, a way to expand the sociality of print culture to include the anticipatory voice of the dead who speak the living into being. The dead have a "world-disclosive power," an ecstatic power to gather and orient a community towards a future goal (90). This is because the dead, as legible signs of death itself, are "the ultimate future possibility" of the subject. But this future possibility is also a return to the conditions that make possible the subject's birth as well. "As human beings," Harrison writes, "we are born of the dead-of the regional ground they occupy, of the languages they inhabited, of the worlds they brought into being, of the many institutional, legal, cultural, and psychological legacies that, through us, connect them to the unborn" (ix). The dead do not pertain to the homogeneous march of calendrical time precisely because they *perdure* in the "anachronic realm of the progenitors to whom the living remain beholden for their houses, their harvests, their laws, their customs, their patrimonies [and] their wisdom" (94). Mourning functions as a mode of confirming this heritage,

of consuming the dead as a mode of affirming this very identification and indebtedness. The tomb incorporates the reader in its affective call, reminding her of a bond to her fellow readers, not through the simultaneity of the date on the page but rather as their shared location as the work of the dead upon the future, as the fulfillment of a foundational death that contains within it all such future iterations. Mourning, then, is necessarily prophetic in its narrative mode as the experience of loss or a passing produces the subject in the present. Mourning, neglecting the fantasy of the blank page that Certeau describes in the scriptural economy, functions as a palimpsestual scryptural economy that produces and reproduces the dead as the material medium for inscribing and producing community. This is why, when Renan speaks of the sentimental side of nationalism, he produces the dead as evidence. "Of all the cults, that of the ancestors is most legitimate," he says, "for the ancestors have made us what we are" (19).

**III. Books Buried in the Earth**

During the night of September 21, 1823, Joseph Smith was visited by a dead man who proceeded to map out his future. The visitant told the young man, then only 17 years old, about a burial site in the hills near his home. There he would find redemption, for himself and the world, in the form of a book. Smith writes, "He said there was a book deposited…that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants [of this continent]" (*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* 12). This event, which is recorded in Church history as Smith's Second Vision, was his first encounter with the angel Moroni, the celestial form of one of these ancient inhabitants, a prophet and chronicler of America who, "being dead and raised again therefrom" (J. Smith *Teachings of Presidents of the*

*Church: Joseph Smith* 58), appeared to Joseph in order to incite this new prophet to exhume Moroni's writing from its resting place on the frontier.[13] Smith would not be able to retrieve the text, what would become known as *The Book of Mormon*, until the end of the decade, but it is this visitation, the announcement of all that will follow, that is laid out in official history as foundational event for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It is here, in this Messianic moment, in which the past of Moroni, the present of Smith, and the future of the recovered text meet in "an instantaneous present" (Anderson 24), and it is to this moment that the Church-that-will-be returns to consume the narrative of its birth.

Smith's revelation is not the first vision that described the hills on the Western frontier as holding the redemptive remains of America's past. For several years prior to Smith's revelation, speculation regarding the earth mounds in Ohio and New York, as well as the Southern frontier in Virginia and the Carolinas, had become a popular topic among both professional and amateur antiquarians. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson remarks on the "barrows" in which he discovers the bones of unknown people (104-07). William Cullen Bryant wrote about these dead who "slumber" in the American landscape in his poetry ("Thanatopsis" l. 50). And in 1820, just a few years before Moroni appears to Smith, the American Antiquarian Society's inaugural publication contained the first comprehensive survey of the mounds to date (Sayre 244). These mounds, most often understood as both burial places and fortifications, held the American historical imagination in thrall, offering, as remnants of the past, a connection between the New and ancient worlds. "Here," as critic Curtis Dahl points out, "were mighty ruins

[13] Smith's First Vision is recorded as an event, three years previous, in which he sought council from God regarding which sect of Christianity to join and was answered by a vision of heaven and a command from God not to join any of them (Bushman *Joseph Smith* 56-59).

comparable to those of Egypt or Greece" (178); the land itself thus became "an emblem of antique grandeur" (Sayre 226). This new view of American history transformed the earth itself into a tomb. Ohio, one writer declared, was "nothing but one vast cemetery of the beings of past ages" (quoted in Dahl 181), and the attendant excavations and exhumations were done in the hope that hidden in the land was evidence of a civilized legacy that would "rival" the European ruin and lay to rest those skeptical of the possibility of building a civilized nation in an uncivilized world.[14] The mounds offered unprecedented historical depth for the American landscape and so offered the newly established nation a chance at cultural redemption.

It is not surprising, then, that those interested in the mounds discovered in them a melancholy narrative, not of a savage Indian past, but of a "slain white race" (Dahl 181). Accounts of the burial mounds insisted that they were evidence that ancient America was not the untamed, unkempt wilderness now before them but rather traces of a developed polity consisting of large cities and a burgeoning population (Dahl 180-181). And while the great mound builder civilization was a *n*ative American history, it was *not* an Indian history.[15] Dahl notes that most studies of the structures agreed that "Mound-Builders were not Indians at all but men of a

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[14] Dahl notes that the archaeological interest in the land was very much driven by the desire to answer not only cultural objections to the "barbaric" American landscape but also scientific ones by Buffon et al. Some of the more "informal" excavations were of course done for the purpose of material gain. The number and availability of the mounds made grave digging and treasure hunting a popular frontier activity. See Southerton (23-26) and Silverberg. Before finding and translating the *Book of Mormon*, Smith himself participated as a "seer" for such frontier excavations. For more on Smith's participation in these activities see Vogel, Quinn. Fawn Brodie also discusses this era of Smith's life (16-37).

[15] I would like to draw attention here to a distinction the entire study will exploit, namely that between the Native discourse (pertaining to the Native American or Amerindian) and the native discourse that it becomes (pertaining to an American nativism) that, while it may rely on evoking the Native American, works to incorporates a non-Indian community.

different and now extinct race" (181-182). In fact, when the Indian did find his way into this narrative, it was frequently as the exterminating force, the violent usurpers that wiped this civilized people from the earth. The poet Bryant, for instance, implied in his work that these builders "were not red men, for it was the red men who massacred them" (Dahl 179). The mound-builder narrative thus accomplishes the dual task of establishing America's claim to historical grandeur, and thus its potential to house a grand civilization again, while at the same time denying the viability of the Indian's claim to civilization by divorcing him from that legacy, even blaming him for its disappearance, confirming his barbarity. Veneration, in this historical narrative, was thus accompanied by erasure or condemnation. In the Indian's place, the white American, whose civilized and civilizing potential was self-evident, rose to claim this heritage as his own, confirming his right to the land as his society expanded westward. "The mounds," as Gordon Sayre writes, "made possible an imperial historiography in which western frontiersmen became the heirs to a classical civilization destroyed by invaders who were not truly *native* Americans" (229). These burial mounds thus became the scene of writing, not only a new past for America but a new present and future as well.

When Moroni appears to Joseph in 1823, he tells him that it is precisely this history of the ancient mound builders that the buried text will reveal. Smith's *History of the Church* records the announcement as "there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent and the source from which they sprang" (12). When Smith published his translation of the plates in 1830, the text contained a head note reminiscent of this announcement, saying that the text that followed was "an abridgement of the Record," or rather record*s* of the Peoples of Jared, Nephi and Laman; it offers a "record" of the past, "*the* Record"

of the people that came before (*The Book of Mormon*). The book is the "cornerstone" of the Mormon faith, and so it is often read by secular critics in the context of religious texts, but I would draw attention to how the text embraces the character of the chronicle and history, a narrative that *accounts* for or makes a *record* of America's past. While studies of the *Book of Mormon* frequently focus their analysis of the text and its production on the context of competing Evangelicalisms after the period called The Second Great Awakening,[16] I want to shift that focus here to this other, perhaps similarly devout discourse taking place at the same time: the quandary of American history and how it was to be written. The *Book of Mormon* offers a new way to read the latter issue precisely because of its engagement with the first. As Paul Gutjahr explains, "The Book of Mormon … appeared at a time when religiously-bent American readers were immersed in a print culture with two basic, overarching characteristics: the culture was saturated both with the Bible and an interest in historical writing" (276). The popularity of the Bible is understandable in a period of revivalisms so strong they "burn over" New York, but it is the rising popularity of a particular fictional genre that both explains and aggravates the interest in history. This is the conquering historical romance, an incredibly popular genre that gave rise to the first proliferation of national literature in the New World.[17] It is a genre developed around the model of Sir Walter Scott's fiction and, often by close imitation of Scott, developed a domestic literary product with the help of America readers' hunger for his

[16] A sample of this criticism includes: Bloom, Forsberg, Hansen, and Noll. Jan Shipps shifts this criticism by reading Mormonism as a *new* religion on par with Christianity and Islam, rather than a sect of the former in *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*.

[17] George Dekker has a thorough study of Scott's influence in North America in which he traces the development of a Scott model for national fiction in the United States. For more information about the rise and popularity of the historical romance in the Americas, as well as its contribution to national culture, see: Bell; Gould; Sommer; Gonález Echevarría; Balderston.

texts. In Hart's study of popular fiction in North America during this period, the author states "from 1814, when Waverly appeared anonymously, to 1832, when the last of the Tales of My Landlord was issued, [Scott's] novels were the most popular of all American pleasure reading" (73). Samuel Goodrich said of the Scott model: "Everybody read these works; everybody – the refined and the simple – shared in the delightful trances which seemed to transport them to remote ages" (quoted in Hart 74), and Catharine Maria Sedgwick said of one of Scott's novels: "I salute it with as much enthusiasm as a Catholic would a holy relic" (quoted in Hart 73). Scott's romances thus functioned much like Anderson imagines the local newspaper did, creating a shared reading experience of popular fiction, the consumption in kind that allowed one to imagine his fellow consumers as part of a particular community.[18] The popularity of Scott became a way for domestic writers to supplant his Highland history with an American heritage. This desire on the part of the reading public to consume historical narratives led to a dramatic increase in national production of historical narratives, peaking during the 1820s when "almost a third of the novels written by Americans dealt with the colonial period or the Revolution" (Hart 80). The devout readers of historical romance, taking in a text in the sacrosanct manner of a "holy relic," thus formed the basis of a national readership and the texts that responded to their call transformed the Scottish medieval landscape into a more familiar one.

While *The Book of Mormon* does not take as its object colonization or revolution in the traditional sense, its layered narrative does circulate around a peoples' journey to the New World and their schisms and struggles and deaths here. This structure is instantly recognizable by the

[18] In *Beyond Imagined Communities*, Castro-Klarén et al argue that while Anderson privileges the work of the periodical, the Americas was just as significantly marked (if not more so) by its fictional production.

American reader as that of her own family, her own nation in its journey West to the New World and its struggle to establish a thriving, independent society. The "Golden Bible," as it was called by its contemporaneous critics, thus explicitly engages with this interest in national history and, as a textual artifact, participated in the material scene of the book. For the Mormons, history was not a distinct interest apart from scripture; for these Americans, as Harold Bloom argues, "their history *is* sacred" (Bloom 101, emphasis in original). The righteous Nephites, the last of whom will visit Joseph in 1823, were not a people of the Book, but a people of the book*s*. When Lehi receives his revelation of the Promised Land, it is a vision of a book that guides him, his divine knowledge the product of reading (3-4). Before his family can leave for this new land, Lehi sends his sons to retrieve another book, brass plates that contain "the record of the Jews and also a genealogy of my forefathers" (7), in order for them to "preserve unto our children the language of our fathers; and also that we may preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets" (8). If the Book of Mormon can be characterized as a foundational text, both as the "cornerstone" of a religion and an explanation of New World origins, then it is one that rests in its turn on the foundation of the text, or rather, two texts: the brass plates of history and the visionary book of revelation.[19] The American past in the *Book of Mormon* addresses itself to its future in the form of its present reader. The past creates, in advance of its coming, a space for the present, incorporating the present reader into its heritage through its prophetic voice.

[19] Even when the presence of a prior civilization is announced, it appears *as a text*, the book of Ether, which tells the story of the Jaredites that preceded Lehi and his family in settling in this Promised Land and is itself absorbed into Moroni's record.

In her introduction to the new Penguin edition of the *Book of Mormon*, religious studies scholar Laura Maffly Kipp notes that "*The Book of Mormon* does not dictate lifestyle traits or health codes, nor does it educate readers about priesthood hierarchy, ordinances for the dead, esoteric rites, or eternal marriages. The Book of Mormon is, first of all, a story of ancient peoples" (J. Smith *The Book of Mormon* vii). The text, as Smith himself directed, was to be understood as a history, and the "curious book" was received by many as yet another iteration of the popular historical romance (Shipps 26). The text itself foregrounds history and historiography. The chroniclers often speak of the purpose and process of their writing. Nephi, for example, in one of his many explanations for his text, says, "I, Nephi, have written these things unto my people, that perhaps I might persuade them that they would remember the Lord their Redeemer" (50). Writing, he says, is a memorial act, its goal the future performance of memory. The text is also marked by an aggressive chronological structure that emphasizes the passage of time. The phrase "and it came to pass" overwhelms the opening of the text; only four of the first fifteen paragraphs do *not* start with this phrase that Fawn Brodie says appears at least 2,000 times in the text (63). These structures announce the work of history in the text, marking that history as itself sacred. As Robert Flanders argues, Smith saw his work and himself "as a kind of prime agent in inaugurating the new premillennial history..a hinge between the old profane history and a new sanctified one" (Flanders 110). The book published by Smith in 1830 is a history composed of several chronicles, a single tome but multiple texts. Together, these texts told the story of two Jewish immigrant groups from the Middle East: the Jaredites, who came to America at the fall of Babel, grew into a society that numbered in the millions and self-destructed, leaving a lone survivor to record their history; and the Lehites who came to America

around 600 BC, split into two fraternal factions, one following the righteous prophet Nephi and the other his jealous brother Laman whose descendents eventually exterminate those of the former, again leaving one survivor to record the events of the end.[20] The Lamanites, debased both by their neglect of religion and civil society, physically darkened to mark their fallen state ("that they might not be enticing unto [the Nephites], the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them" 71), survive in their contemporary descendents, the American Indian.

The narrative is remarkably similar to the structure of popular mound builder theories. It describes an advanced, exterminated race while condemning the Native American for its death. Like the burial mound narratives, the *Book of Mormon* presents its reader with familiar bodies but pushes this identification even further by making these bodies not only *not* Indian but *white* and not only advanced but *Christian*. The Nephite race is "white and exceeding fair" (71), marked in contrast to their dark brethren and, while they began their New World venture as part of the Jewish diaspora, they receive the ministry of Christ in America and so become Christians, distinct from the Lamanites who "have rejected the gospel of Christ" (556). The Nephites had, through the prophesies of Nephi and Jacob, already heard of "this Jesus Christ" (484), but Christ realizes this work of prophecy himself by appearing in the text, revealing himself to the inhabitants of the New World. "Behold I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified shall come into the world," he tells them, inviting all to investigate his mortal wounds, confirming his identity through the signs of his death and asking them to *remember* the (historic) prophecy of his coming (485-486). He ministers to all, and in doing so brings about a period of peace

[20] There is a third group, the people of Zarahemla (called the Mulekites), who come to America around the same time as the Lehites and are absorbed into that group.

between the two groups, but only the fair Nephites retain their faith and finally only Moroni remains to beseech his reader to remember. He concludes the text by saying:

> I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God, and the Lord God will say unto you, did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead? Yea, even as one speaking out of the dust? (598)

This prophetic cry is structured as a mournful wail from the dead and so the text draws the ear of the reader near the earth to listen to the grave narrate its destiny. Moroni's is not the only grave that speaks, either. Nephi concludes his books in the same sepulchral voice. Acknowledging his impending death, he says, "I speak unto you, as the voice of one crying out from the dust" (122).

The text also posits a foundational vacancy for the Americas, a primary emptiness marked by the stories of immigration, stories that all occur within the frame of documented history. There are no shadowy, mythical beginnings for a native race. First there is nothing, and, as the texts mark upon it, the land is filled, the book thus clears the ground of any claim to immemorial nativity and leaves only the voice of these familiar dead. All here are immigrants and it is only through the word of God that this promised land is made available for settlement.[21] It is only through the work of the prophet, who mediates between mankind and the Word, that

[21] The promise implied here is not only the land held in covenant with the Lord, a land promised to a people, but a land *of* promise, one that will bear fruit. In an early revelation, Smith recorded God's word to his followers as "I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh" (*Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.* 161). In the *Doctrine and Covenants* Missouri is listed as "Missouri – the land of promise" (499).

their land can become "the land of your inheritance" (*Book of Mormon* 29), and it is only through the book that one can access this prophetic voice. It is into this blank page, this primary vacancy, that the dead prophets are interred; if these prophets speak from the grave, as both Moroni and Nephi assert, that grave is both the earth and the book, and so the text functions as a memorial not only to the past but also those who have passed.

These memorials, like Anderson's tombs, arrest the subject, require from the living an acknowledgment of their connection. The Mormon historical revelation bequeaths to the Americas not only a locatable native heritage, but also what Renan described as "the will to perpetuate the value of that heritage," the responsibility of the present to pass on this heritage. In this way the consent of the community is founded on an absence that presses upon the subject and directs her actions toward a future. This is what critic Robert Pogue Harrison describes as the *humic* foundation of community, the foundational burial that renders the land habitable for human society. The dead retain ownership of a legacy inherited by the living and, whether or not this is the Lamanites' suffering due to the iniquity of their fathers or the Nephites' compulsion to record and thus preserve the words of the past, the dead mark upon the living and hold sway over the future.

The reader is thus hailed by the dead who speak from this grave, called by bodies so familiar in their social identifications that they function as an anticipation of the reader herself. If I were there that would be me, she says, and, as he goes so will I. But even as the reader volunteers identification by mourning this familiar form, she has *already* been spoken into the text by the prophets. In his study of the text, Monte Nyman says that "The Book of Mormon is unique because it was written hundreds of years ago but is addressed to and for a people

hundreds of years in the future" (1). The arrival of the Gentile in the Promised Land, the revelation of the Book of Mormon and the absorption of the faithful Gentile into the New World heritage has already been revealed by the text (27-31). Nephi writes:

> And it came to pass, that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles, upon the land of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren [the Lamanites]; and they were scattered before the Gentiles, and were smitten. And I beheld the spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles; and they did prosper, and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people, before they were slain. (27)

Here the ancient prophet sees the Gentile lay claim to the land, removing the Indian with the blessing of divine order. Nephi also describes the Revolution, during which the Gentile was "delivered by the power of God" (28) from "their mother Gentiles" (27) and finally the coming of a book that will restore truth to the land, the adherents of which "shall be numbered among the seed of [Nephi's] father…and they shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever" (30-31). The reader is already inscribed in the book, already impressed into its service, and so the prophetic history marks upon the present subject, interpolating her into this new narrative of history. Through Smith's later restoration of the Aaronic priesthood, this prophetic incorporation becomes a corporeal one as well. While the future Saints were "cultural Gentiles," their true

heritage, Smith revealed, pertained to the same family as that these ancient people therefore they were "lawful heirs, according to the flesh" as well (Nyman 637).[22]

The incorporating work of these prophecies is supported by the structure in which they are spoken in the *Book of Mormon*. The experience of revelation in the book of Nephi repeats the event of witnessing by pairing the injunction to "Look!" with the response "and I looked" and "and I beheld" (22). "Look! And I looked…look! And I looked…look! And I looked" (23-26), Nephi writes, over and over, describing the work of the spirit upon him but also in his repetition hailing the reader with the punctuated command. This first person observation point "and I looked" becomes the "I" of the reader as she witnesses the revelation as well. But the reader is not limited to the "I" of Nephi's witnessing. This first person incorporation is echoed in the structure of testimony carried throughout the text. The *Book of Mormon* opens with the words "I, Nephi," an identification that he repeats over and over in the hundreds of pages filled by his chronicle. When others interrupt the text, they present themselves in the same manner. "I, Jacob," his brother's speech begins; "I, Jacob….I, Jacob" it repeats until it returns to "I, Nephi," then "I, Mormon," and finally to Moroni, who begins the last chapter of the text "Now I, Moroni" (596). The proliferation of authors laying claim to that "I" means that these declarations do not function as assertions of autonomy or individuality but rather become through their repetition a corporate "I" of testimony. As the reader identifies with this prophetic heritage, the "I," jumbled among the numerous narrators, becomes her eye/"I" as well, her own witness and testimony to the past.

[22] For more on this revelation see *Doctrine and Covenants* 86 and 109.

This negotiation of inheritance and the conscription of the reader into the structure of the text reflects the sentimental work of the historical romance that will be the focus of the remainder of this study. Like the *Book of Mormon*, these fictional texts revisit their national histories in order to discover traces of a shared heritage. Current criticism emphasizes the sexual coupling and the generative romance of the marriage plot around which many if not all of these romances circulate. This criticism emphasizes the somatic nature of the genre, the corporeal language of romance that is read in the tears of joy and grief spilled by its characters as well as its readers. But while I agree that a libidinal energy is at the heart of both the narrative and its readers' responses, I argue that the focus on sexual coupling neglects to consider another bodily discourse: that of death and mourning. These texts, in attempting to retell a history that *foretells* the present, deploy the dead in this service and demonstrate, like the *Book of Mormon*, how mourning becomes a way to inscribe prophecy into history. In the next two chapters I will show how death does important cultural work in both the disavowal (Chapter Two) and establishment (Chapter Three) of sites of identification, identifications that give place to contemporary communities by projecting their *affective* formation into a pre-revolutionary history.

In Chapter Two, "Clearing ground: Sovereign Tears, or, The Indian is History" I look at how the Vanishing American trope in North America and creole patriotism in South America both venerated and obliterated the Native American as a way for the new nations to justify independence and lay claim to the land. I look at several New England texts including Catherine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hiawatha* (1855) in order to explore their use of removal or exile in their consideration of the indigenous past. These texts, I argue, locate the reader in the position of the mourner and the tears that mark the loss of

the Native American also mark the survival logic implied by the capacity to mourn. These sovereign tears thus work to assert both a loss and an enduring presence. I compare this narrative strategy with the tropes gathered under the umbrella of creole patriotism in Spanish American literature during the same time period. These creole writers claimed a sovereign inheritance from an indigenous patrimony but even as they celebrated Amerindian history and claimed the Native as their ancestor, they also maintain these celebratory objects at a chronological distance. I conclude by looking at how these identificatory strategies come together in Félix Varela's *Jicoténcal* (1826), how identification is simultaneously encouraged and declared dangerous and, ultimately, impossible. These texts, I argue, work to clear the ground of a Native American presence, preparing the way for a new heritage in the more familiar foundational bodies.

Chapter Three, "The Shadow of the M/Other: A Story of Forefathers" continues the work of Chapter Two by investigating how those inheriting the revolution reconsider the structure of the national family. In this chapter I develop the idea of mourning in these texts through a study of three historical romances that attempt to discover an indigenous heritage for white America. These romances seem to forward a miscegnated national subject, one that opposes popular racial doctrine as well as the privileged identities of the creole readers. The two central romances under investigation, Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824) and José de Alencar's Indianist romance *Iracema* (1865), each present their readers with an interracial couple with a mixed-race son. This sexual coupling seems to ameliorate the violence of colonial history and disjuncture of revolution by producing a family romance that displaces a purely European or imported heritage. But competing with the sexual work of these foundational families is the spectacle of death in these novels, focused through the figure of the dead mother and the possibilities for inscription

that her corpse offers. This mournful work illustrates how these romancers used the interlocking discourses of gendered desire, mourning and ultimately identification to create the nation as a site of desire whose objectification is made possible by the intervention of death. The first romance I investigate is Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824). Its focus on women and the theme of miscegenation made it a scandalous book, but my reading focuses on how Child deploys these potentially subversive bodies in a conservative, hegemonic fashion. While Child's romance also raises the specter of the Other mother, the Indian mother, only to have her disappear, the Brazilian José de Alencar's Indianist romance *Iracema* (1865) takes this Native mother as its focus and finds with her the formation of a *Brazilian* race. But, as in Child's romance, the best mothers are dead mothers. I argue that the mother's death in this romance functions as a form of redressive machinery for the foundational but still transgressive *mestiçagem*.

The study concludes by looking at the preoccupation with language, naming and translation evinced by these romances in the Chapter Four, "The Task of the Translator: A Key into the Languages of America." If, as Robert Pogue Harrison asserts, we are born of the dead and "the languages they inhabited" (21) then the *Book of Mormon* and the historical romances that share its prophetic voice must confront a dual inheritance of a foreign Native language, the Amerindian tongues, and a native foreign language, the English and Spanish inherited from their colonial predecessors. Nephi declares the preservation of their history on the plates in part a memorializing act assuring "that we may preserve unto our children the language of our fathers" (8). But the *Book of Mormon* only preserves this language in translation, its original surviving only in the trace carried by the names and titles that resist interpretation. The new native

language the book creates for the American landscape, the translation it offers to the community it forms, is predicated upon the very experience of displacement and loss that its narrative recreates to define its readers' relationship to the past. If the material reality of the dead provide an affective bond between readers and an imagined community, then the dead letter provides a similar platform on which to build the modern nation. By taking up the dead letter, translation itself becomes a mournful practice, one that recreates a unique *print* language that transforms the imported languages of Spanish, English, and Portuguese into native dialects that are tied to the bodies buried in the New World. The bond of love effected by the work of mourning is not without its ambivalence and in the play of fractious rivalry can bear witness to or itself reveal the fragility of communities built upon and through this libidinal exchange. By relying on the figure of the prophet and translator, these romances also speak to the ongoing threat of dissolution in the face of the overwhelming unknown – and unknowable - beyond. I end this study with a brief meditation on how that excess is made present in the text. The mediatory figures of the prophet, historian, and translator work to occult the abyssal sources of their knowledge, the voice of the divine, the sea of the past, the untranslatable excess of language itself. They intervene on behalf of their readers and make legible these experiences. But by her very work of mediation, this figure also reveals the existence of that beyond that unworks the shared bond of the commodified trace represented by these national romances.

## Chapter Two
## Clearing ground: Sovereign Tears, or, The Indian is History

"The eye of Mohegan changed gradually, from its sorrowful expression to a look of wildness, that might be supposed to border on the inspiration of a prophet, as he continued – "But he will go to the country where his fathers have met. The game shall be plenty as the fish in the lakes. No woman shall cry for meat. No Mingo can ever come. The chase shall be for children, and all just red-men shall live together as brothers"

"John! This is not the heaven of a Christian!" cried Miss Temple; "you deal now in the superstition of your forefathers."

"Fathers! Sons!" said Mohegan with firmness – "all gone – all gone! I have no son but the Young Eagle, and he has the blood of a white man."

-*The Pioneers*

"The worst feature in the history of those years, is, that no man spake for the Indian"

–Emerson, "At Concord"

### I. Sovereignty: A Vanishing Act

In the first edition of Catherine Maria Sedgwick's historical romance *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in Massachusetts* (1827), the author offers a poem on the front cover, a preview of (or perhaps a warning about) the narrative inside.[1] The two stanzas, attributed only to "E." read as follows:

Here stood the Indian chieftain, rejoicing in his glory

How deep the shade of sadness that rests upon his story:

For the white man came with power – like brethren they met –

[1] While the material condition of this epigraph is determined from the facsimile edition of *Hope Leslie* digitized by the University of Virginia, quotations from the novel are from the Penguin edition of *Hope Leslie*.

But the Indian fires went out, and the Indian sun has set

And the chieftain has departed – gone is his hunting ground,
And the twanging of his bow-string is a forgotten sound: --
Where dwelleth yesterday? And where is echo's cell?
Where has the rainbow vanished? – there does the Indian dwell

The stanzas, selected from "Sachem's Hill" by Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, describe the former inhabitants of the eponymous hill located outside Boston.[2] It was here, Follen says in her own preface to the complete poem, that a group of friendly Native people lived until their demise at the hand of an unnamed epidemic that occurs *after* the colonists appear but is not, in Follen's preface, causally linked to the Europeans. "In a short time," she writes, "nothing was left of them," except "the name of this little hill, which some suppose…was given to this state" (Follen 15). The material upon which she inscribes her poem, then, is only a vague reminder of a long-gone community, one whose removal made space for and, through "a light alteration," gave title to the new colony. The shadowy, passive structure of this last gift ("the name…was given to this state") removes the state in question from the active stance of *taking* the land or name. The giver is, like the Sachem himself, mysteriously removed.

[2] Eliza Lee Follen nee Cabot (1787-1860) was an outspoken Boston reformer. Her abolitionism is well known but there is not much information available on her possible advocacy regarding Indian Removal. Based on her known political views, poetry such as this, and the cultural milieu in Boston during this time, it is confidently implied later in this chapter that her sympathies did not reside with the US government on the issue of the Indian Removal Act.

This missing actor also fails to appear in the poem itself. The first stanza, not included on Sedgwick's novel, describes the Sachem gazing out from his hill, actively and possessively *taking in* the landscape: "His were the pathless forests, and his the hills so blue;/And on the restless ocean danced only his canoe."[3] The "eagle eye" of the Sachem gazes down from his seat of power, seeing all and seeing all of it as *his*. The repetition of the possessive pronoun reinforces not only his stature but his very existence as well. The forests, the hills, the canoe are all material signs of *his* world, the objects that serve to establish his identity. But these physical objects are, like the Sachem himself, supplanted by "yesterday," an "echo" and a "rainbow," the immaterial and ultimately unlocatable Native life that concludes Sedgwick's selection. When the poet imagines the possible return of the departed and the opportunity for a new gaze, the powerful and possessive Sachem of the first stanza is imagined as a passive, captive audience. "Should his free-born spirit descend again to earth,/" the poets writes, "…Would not his altered nature rejoice with rapture high/ at the changed and glorious prospect that now would meet his eye?" By using "eye" at the end of the line, as conclusion to the rhyme scheme, the voice recalls the only other such ending, the second line of the opening stanza, "Glanced over hill and valley the Sachem's eagle eye." In this return, though, the voice rewrites the Sachem's possessive eye/I as a passive receptor. In the revision, the "changed and glorious prospect" acts *upon* the Sachem's eye, his "altered nature" no longer able to summon the sense of entitlement with which

[3] Sedgwick's selection is slightly altered from the complete version. In Follen's *Collected Poems*, the poet writes "Here stood the *aged* chieftan" instead of "Indian chieftan." The former perhaps naturalizes a removal (translated as death, as I will argue) while the latter privileges difference from the temporally and racially displaced other (age is, afterall, a shared fate). But while the former indicates a shared mortality, it is only through the displacement onto the Indian that this mortality can itself be grasped. The Native American therefore functions as a legible sign of death, an inscribable figure that stands in between me and the aporia of my own death.

he had previously viewed the land. In this new prospect, the material signs of white life, the "stately domes…happy homes…village bells…and many a gleaming spire, of faith in Jesus tells" (l. 21-24), overwhelms the Sachem, allowing him to overcome his feelings of loss and revenge with a holy calm (l. 27), a calm sanctified by death. In this imagined return, the Sachem becomes a passive object through which to project white postcolonial gratification for the accomplishments of their colonial predecessors. The native, once spectator, becomes the speculum through which the author can reveal her own origins.

Mediating between the "Here…glanced" of the first stanza and the "has departed" of the remainder of the poem is moment of contact, "like brethren they met." But missing between the Native's material and active existence and immaterial and passive afterlife is the event of removal itself. Instead, the verse describing contact moves directly to an extinguished Native population: "But the Indian fires went out, and the Indian sun has set." The active potential of "went out" is limited by the intransitive verb; the object here does not receive the action but rather itself functions as the subject of the verb, excluding the possibility of an external actor and maintaining a silence about the conditions that made this extinguishment possible. This gap is reinforced by the transformation of the departure into a sunset, a movement that remains external to, even in defiance of, human action. Just as the poet is silent in her preface regarding the origins of the epidemic that wiped the tribe from the pages of history, so the poem itself describes the Natives' departure while refusing to acknowledge its cause. The poem's structure thus makes removal simultaneous with but not causally connected to white settlement, removing, along with the transitive verbs, the assignation of responsibility for this "shade of sadness." Nothing is permitted to act *upon* and therefore no act*or* can be held responsible. The poet then

goes on to make the departed Indian into a symbol for an immaterial afterlife, but she gives the Native "the land of deathless glories" without giving him death itself. The parting of the Indian is a *non*-event: "in the land of spirits," the poet writes, "the Indian has a place," but behind him he leaves no remains; he has death with no actual dead. In contrast to the insistent physicality of the gaze in the first stanza, "*Here*, from this hillock," the Sachem is now "*there*, midst saints and angels" (emphasis added), a spirit in the unlocatable *beyond*. "Where?" the third stanza asks, "Where?...Where?," but the answer, the "there," is *no* place. The removal is a complete one, tinged with an amnesia compelled by the mystery of this disappearance. The Native's absence is one with no memorial, making him, like the "forgotten sound," outside of memory. Instead, the Native becomes a way to imagine other, more recognizable deaths, like those of the "friends we love so dearly" that conclude the poem. The Sachem's death, a death that remains inscrutable, is in the end, a way to understand the mortal inheritance of the present community. By revealing the Native as a presence barred from our understanding and physical reality, the poet can recognize by contrast the continued presence of these more familiar dead in "all the treasures of their souls [that] shall be with us forever" (l. 40).

Behind the poem, Sedgwick's romance reinforces the removal of native and narration. Her novel tells the story of one Indian maiden's sacrifices, both social and corporeal, that made possible the survival of a white colonial man and later the reunion of his future bride and her captive sister. But instead of a hero's reward, Magawisca is banished from the scene of the novel in a voluntary exile that erases her claim to land, heart, and page. For much of the novel, Magawisca's active and affecting presence dominates the narrative as she struggles between loyalties to her family and her white friends. But she ultimately fades, ceding her place to the

title character in the last two-thirds of the text, and the reader, perhaps confused by the focus of the novel thus far, is reminded by this concession that *this* is the story of *Hope Leslie*. Magawisca's early heroic work, including her spectacular Pocohontas-like corporeal intervention on behalf of Everell Fletcher that costs her an arm, is supplanted by the eponymous Leslie, who, in the end, becomes "*our* heroine" (Sedgwick 359, emphasis added) even as Magawisca "disappeared for ever" (354).[4] This triumph of the white colonial over her Native rival (both in love and as an alternative focus for the affections of the reader) also necessitates the departure of the other Indians that remain. Both women are restored to their families, but while Leslie joins the Fletchers in their foundational efforts in Connecticut, the Pequods "began their pilgrimage to the far western forests." "That which remains untold of their story," the narrator says, "Is lost in the deep, voiceless obscurity of those unknown regions" (359). Sedgwick concludes the historical contest between white settler and Native Americans in the language of removal, but a removal that resists comparisons to contemporaneous political debates surrounding Indian Removal policy by framing the migration not only as voluntary but, more precisely, a "pilgrimage." Removal thus transforms into a devotional act, its sacred destination "unknown" (359), remaining beyond the veil, reserved from white understanding. The Natives' story is, through this pilgrimage, "lost in the deep, voiceless obscurity" of this no-place and so their geographical displacement becomes a temporal one as well. Their (hi)story ends with removal, the rest, including their possible survival, is illegible: "voiceless" as a "forgotten sound," "unknown" and "lost" as the "yesterday," "echo" and "rainbow" in Follen's verse. The exile's

[4] Because it is her own father's violent act in which she intervenes, Magawisca's sacrifice also works to affirm instead of deny Indian violence, her disfigurement an enduring reminder of the Native threat at the borders of the colony.

dislocation is not only a physical absence of the subject but a supplementary material loss as well. What lingers in Follen's verse and Sedgwick's prose is only the recognition of passing, the recovery of the subject himself remains impossible because he remains *undocumented*, an exile "without a tellable history" (Said 176). This persistence of *lost* memory reinforces the connection between the material documents of memory and the possibility of a narratable subject, maintaining the "sans-papier," or undocumented subject *exterior to* the figure of the citizen (Derrida Paper Machine 2).

To turn the reader's mind from what she *cannot* know, the novel returns to the colonial marriage plot and, emphasizing the continuing histories of the white population, moves quickly forward in time through condensed biographical notes on the lives (and deaths) of those that remain. The reader sees Governor Winthrop on his deathbed, refusing to sign orders of banishment, Master Craddock spending his final years being doted upon by Hope, and the recovery of wayward Jennet's body, whose sins in life caused severe grief for our heroine, but through death is restored to a community of mourners. Emphasizing the importance of her mortal state in this recovery, the narrator writes, "Even Jennet, *dead*, was wrapped in the mantle of charity." It is Hope herself who pleads for her mortal rites/rights and "Tears, of humility and pity, were shed over her grave; a fit tribute, from virtuous and tender woman, to a fallen, unhappy sister" (369). These brief histories reinforce what is lost by the Pequod "pilgrimage," and so the novel, like the poem, only *gives death* to the Indian in the form of removal, itself a voluntary exile, the banishment to a non-location that, while marked by an "essential sadness" (Said 173), cannot be restored through the affective work of mourning. There are no bodies to recover, no gravesites over which to shed tears. In this way, these texts extend exile as a double-

edged necropolitics, one that denies the inscriptive possibilities death for the Native as a way to clear the ground for more recognizable, more formative deaths: those pertaining to the white colonial community.

These post-colonial romances present a colonial space marked not by conflict but by a natural historical evolution, a march of time that takes as its victims the Native inhabitants of the New World. In this way history and progress, time itself, becomes *the* actor in the drama of Indian removal, and the historian becomes merely the impartial and innocent observer. The trope of the impartial observer protects the author with a mantle of passivity, denying the *creative* work of writing. History itself is self-evident, and its denial of a Native presence or voice, its essential lack, forecloses any attempt at contesting its conclusions. There are, by its own account, no Other voices. Sedgwick herself admits as much when she claims that the Indian population "could not submit, and live" (3). Sedgwick, defining herself as an "impartial observer," assures the reader that she views the situation of the Native American "in a light very different from that in which they were regarded by our ancestors." She says:

> In our histories, it was perhaps natural that they should be represented as 'surly dogs,' who preferred to die rather than live…Their own historians or poets, if they had such, would as naturally, and with more justice, have extolled their high-souled courage and patriotism. (3-4)

The author's parenthetical "if they had such" denies the opportunity for alternative voices in the historical tradition; "our" histories are written and remain as cultural legacy while "their" histories can only be imagined in the conditional tense of her "would…have," their inscriptive possibilities ultimately remain unrealized. If the relationship with history is cultivated

metonymically through "traces," as G.J. Reiner argues, following the analogy of Langlois and Seignobos (96), then the silent exodus of the Native American and the refusal of indigenous historiography means that the community has disappeared *without a trace*, leaving an insurmountable gap between the present and historical subjects. Instead, all that can be recovered are the marks made by the white historian who writes upon the native body, whose writing reconstitutes the Indian as the inscriptive space for American history even as he writes the native himself out of the scene of history. The book here functions as the replacement for the relic, the substitute trace object, and therefore remains the only material through which to develop knowledge of the past, rendered here as the figure of the Indian. Sedgwick's concluding wish, then, that her book "so far from being intended as a substitute for genuine history" should encourage "our young countrymen…to investigate the early history of their native land" (4), depends on a chain of consumption that can only be fulfilled by the biased sources she describes, and so the "young countrymen" is constituted in his turn by creole historiography, the history written by white Americans of European descent.[5]

This orthodox history shares with the poem and novel a trope that critics have come to term "The Vanishing American" or "The Cult of the Dying Indian." Amid the rush of Indian-themed works in early national literature, George Harrison Orians argued in 1936,[6] authors

[5] "Creole" is an important term for this chapter, but its application can be confusing across languages. While in American English the term "Creole" is usually the term used to describe the Acadian French, I employ it here as the translation of the Spanish term *criollo*, a term used to describe those born in America of (direct) European descent. To emphasize the distinction between common usage and that deployed in this paper, I will use a lower case "c" for creole.
[6] Orians is frequently cited as the origin of the "Vanishing American" term (cf Romero and Dippie, although an investigation of the same trope in sociology seems to have developed

concentrated on the idea of the Native American's disappearance. Once the Indian was proclaimed the most proper subject for the national romance, "it was quickly discovered," Orians argues, "that the most romantic feature of the Indians was their decline" (5). These authors posited that the Native Americans, if not already an extinct race, were on the verge of being so; they believed, as Washington Irving did, that the Indian would soon "vanish like a vapor from the face of the earth" (281). The "Vanishing" texts argued that the Indian community had and continued to shrink before the growth of civilization, rendering his existence contradictory to the condition of modernity. "Society," Irving wrote, "has advanced upon [the Indian] like one of those withering airs" (272). In this deferment to an intractable conflict between civilization and barbarity, these writers express what critic Joshua David Bellin describes as the "quietism so characteristic of nineteenth-century thought on the Indians" (Bellin 11), a quietism that consists of the removal of Native American extinction from the realm of human action. Convers Francis, brother of the Indianist activist Lydia Maria Child, articulated this view in his 1836 biography of John Elliot. "I do not say that blame is necessarily to be attached to those by whom [the Indians] were crowded out," Francis writes, "For, the world over, it is, and has been, generally a law of human progress, that civilized man must overtop and displace uncivilized man" (quoted in Bellin 11). Francis's "quietism" is expressed as a dampening of guilt, a removal of responsibility for or possible action to avoid Indian extinction. Instead, Francis echoes his contemporaries who see Native disappearance as "natural" or an "unavoidable operation of natural causes" (Bellin 13). This recourse to a "law," shared

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independently. Renato Rosaldo calls this latter development "the doctrine of salvage ethnography – record the precious culture before it disappears forever" (81).

throughout the world, "unavoidable" and therefore unchangeable, effects the same active gap witnessed in Follen's poem. No one *makes* the Indian disappear. He disappears because it is in his nature to do so. Because of this its speakers often "summed up Indian fate in images drawn from nature," painting Indian's disappearance variously as a sunset, snow, morning dew, leaves before the wind and the sand washed away by the sea (Dippie 13). "One could deplore the fact that the Indian was earmarked for extinction," historian Brian Dippie says of this rhetoric, "but one could not alter it" (12). This was, in Leslie Fiedler's words, "the pathos of the lost cause" (Fiedler 179). Displaced as an idealized triumph of civilization and development over barbarism and primitive life, the disappearance of indigenous peoples was naturalized as a progressivist fantasy of chronological inevitability. The trope of the Vanishing American thus served not only to elide the violence of conquest and naturalize claims for removal, but it also functioned as a historical foundation for narrating the New World historical romance. While the Americas lacked the grand ruins of Europe, the figure of the Indian stood in their place as figure of historical progression. Because "the Indians constituted America's only genuine claim to antiquity" (Orians 7), their service was much more easily rendered if they were indeed a matter of the past.

The Vanishing American appeared in verse, drama, romance and history and did so prominently as the "Last of the _____ genre," an extinction fantasy that allowed various authors to substitute the name of one unfortunate tribe after another in the blank, allowing them to bid adieu to a range of native peoples. This genre can be traced through Cooper's novel to Whittier's poetry to historical treatises (O'Brien 419). The structure of this language permeated everyday life; even Thoreau, in his journal, recorded his visit to Martha Simons, a famous "last," by

calling her "the only pure-blooded Indian left about New Bedford" (Thoreau *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau: Journal* 390). In *Last of the Mohicans* (1826), the most famous example of the genre, Cooper prefaces the novel with his own discourse on the Vanishing American:

> The Mohicans were the possessors of the country first occupied by the Europeans in this portion of the continent. They were, consequently, the first dispossessed; and the seemingly inevitable fate of all these people, who disappear before the advances, or it might be termed the inroads of civilization, as the verdure of their native forests falls before the nipping frost, is represented as having already befallen them. There is sufficient historical truth in the picture to justify the use that has been made of it…The Red Man has entirely deserted this part of the state. Of all the tribes named in these pages, there exist only a few half-civilized beings of the Oneidas…The rest have disappeared, either from the regions in which their fathers dwelt, or altogether from the earth. (5)

Like his predecessors and like that multitude he would inspire, Cooper strives to record the dark fate he sees hanging over the Native Americans. While he gestures toward the culpability of colonial displacement, blame fades before his concession to the progress of civilization. He groups together its necessary victims, "all these people," as those who remain forever excluded from its realm. The true Indian, it seems, is never civilized. The "seemingly" that implies that this "inevitable fate" is subject to the error of perception, becomes a weaker and weaker qualification as he moves through the comparison with nature to the "historical truth" of disappearance. In his reference to history, Cooper clarifies that he himself is not the author of

this prophecy, merely the messenger of its realization. The safeguard that this Truth provides, against criticism of his presentation of the disappearance as having already occurred, confirms his narrative supposition. The Mohicans, "historical truth" reveals, are already gone. Indeed, marked by the progress of Cooper's own novels the extinction he offers has already occurred. Early on in the novel, Chingachgook recalls the title by declaring that "my boy is the last of the Mohicans" (38). Uncas does not survive the text, though, passing the burden of the "last" back onto his father. But by the time these words were published in 1826, Chingachgook had been dead himself for three years, having fallen victim to a forest fire (much like the leaves before a frost) in Cooper's first Leatherstocking novel *The Pioneers* (1823). In that first novel, Chingachgook is left to sing his own death song and lament that, as he goes off to join his ancestors, there is no one left to mourn for him. Just as he outlined in his preface, Cooper's "Last of" novel performs a lament for a passing that has *already happened* and the reader, having arrived on the scene too late, is left to shed a tear for a man she has known only as a figure in (and of) history.

The trope thus cultivates sympathy for an ultimately irreconcilable figure, one that remains always at a distance temporally and, because of his flight before the advances of civilization, physically as well. For example, in another famous "vanishing" text, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *Hiawatha* (1855), the Indian hero is not only displaced as colonial prehistory but his departure moves him beyond physical reach entirely. Like Follen's Sachem who transforms from material possessor to spiritual receptor, at the moment of contact Hiawatha acts out a kind of self-imposed exile, removing himself from his home and going "On a long and distant journey,/To the portals of the Sunset" (Longfellow 144). Those whose coming

he had prophesied in a vision of men "Painted white were all their faces/And with hair their chins were covered" (138), have at last arrived and, as they sleep as guests in his home, Hiawatha leaves, whispering a brief goodbye to his community.[7] These men have come from the East, "From the land of light and morning," but Hiawatha sets of "Westward! westward!" (145), driven forward in advance of these new men. Hiawatha's removal is notably voluntary and optimistic, though, not mournful or nostalgic; he urges his people to listen to the proselytizing message of his guests, proclaiming its truth up to the moment he pushes his canoe from shore. The Indian does not mourn his departure but moves willingly toward it, toward "the glory of the sunset…the Land of the Hereafter!" (146). Hiawatha, like Follen's Sachem, is removed from the realm of material recoverability and exiled to a non-corporeal, idealized realm, out of history itself. From his place of banishment, the Indian maintains a utopian distance, the *un* place of the *u*-topos; Hiawatha's sunset is unreachable for those that would pursue him, "a horizon that keeps pace with the traveller" (Debray 26).

While posturing as a mournful recollection, this trope in effect works to confirm the *no place* of the Native subject and so clears the ground for white habitation, the growth of which, as the 'natural' progress of civilization, the speaker is also unable to staunch. In this way the lament for the Vanishing American disavows the possibility of a present Indian subject and so contributes to the contemporaneous political arguments regarding the government's Indian Removal policy. In her study of the spectral Native American, Renée Bergland says of this trope,

[7] As in Follen's verse, Hiawatha's sudden departure leaves a causal gap in the narrative. There is no reason given for his journey, perhaps it seemed "natural" for him to go. In this dark caesura the Vanishing act encourages an amnesia regarding conflict. It, in Lora Romero's words, "expunge[s] imperialist conflict from Jacksonian cultural memory" (392).

"By focusing almost exclusively on those who perished, early American writing enacted a literary Indian removal that reinforced and at times even helped to construct the political Indian Removal" (3). This is because the nostalgic performance, while nominally celebrating the lost object, works to confirm that the object is indeed lost. Renato Rosaldo called this posture "imperial nostalgia," tracing a pattern in which "agents of change experience transformations of other cultures as if they were personal losses" (70). The loss is doubled here because the object upon which it fixates is an impossible or fictive condition, an idyll of primitive conditions that exists only as a product of modernity. This vanishing discourse is therefore not merely a nostalgic celebration of the Indian as lost object but, more importantly, a celebration of loss itself. The Native American becomes, as we see in Follen and Longfellow, a naturalized symbol of loss and so the denial of a possibility of material presence for Native American inheres in the structure of the trope. The Vanishing American discourse aggressively excludes the Native American from contemporary participation in the national community even as, at the same time, this figure, circulated in history, poetry and prose, is elevated as the legitimizing claim to a national culture.

It is not surprising, then, to see this trope, frequently the provenance of New England reformers, being deployed in defense of Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act. In Jackson's 1830 State of the Union address the President grafts this romantic language onto his defense of the Removal Act, describing his Removal policies as the same natural, generational shift that his critics claimed for their regional lost tribes:

> Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and Philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it, but its

> progress has never for a moment been arrested, and one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. To follow to the tomb the last of his race and to tread on the graves of extinct nations excite melancholy reflections. But true philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another. (114)

The contentious removal of the Cherokees and Choctaws from Georgia and Alabama is framed here as iterations of the same natural movement that New Englanders claimed for the Pequod and Narragansetts. "The present policy of the Government," he concludes, is but a continuation of the same progressive change by milder process," changes that, despite the attempts at intervention made by "Philanthropy," remain outside the realm of human intervention. Instead, all that remains is the trope itself, the possibility of mourning, the "melancholy reflections" that constitute the discourse. These melancholy reflections are the province of the sovereign body of the survivor, the one who is left to mourn. The sentimental performance, the weeping over an already-lost cause functions as an assertion of this powerful position. Mourning in this discourse is not the identificatory act of melancholic adoration but rather an exorcism of the other, the lost object, beyond the incorporative realm of available material. The Native here is au-delà, beyond reach, an other who remains in the Other world.

Through the deployment of this trope, the Native American is circulated among the community as an object to share and speak through but never incorporate. The possibility for a shared identification, encouraged by the cooptation of Native history as national history, is ultimately disallowed by the insurmountable gap between subject and object. The reader can consume the narrative of the Vanishing Indian but the Indian himself remains extrinsic, evading

the consuming affection of the ego even as it grants the terms of its assertion. In this, the loss of the Native is doubled and he transforms into a figure of pure longing. It is not, then, ultimately contradictory that the Native is simultaneously asserted as the most authentic, most romantic subject for national literature and done away with, over and over again, in its pages. The repetition of his extinction, the continual assertion and erasure of the "last of" functions as a ritual of consumption that perpetuates a desire for this national form, for the nation as it presents itself on the page and yet is everywhere evasive (Anderson). Mourning the Vanishing American thus becomes a way to confirm the presence and sovereignty of the nation that excludes the native presence. The melancholic meditation upon the inevitable extinction of the barbarous Amerindian functions as a survivor logic for the creole community that circulates it. Jackson's claim that the grand sentiment Philanthropy will be appeased by the extinction making room for another resonates with Follen's poem in which the "changed and glorious prospect" of a civilized land full of churches would cause the imagined Sachem to "rejoice with rapture high" (l.19). Speakers on both sides of the Removal Act debate laid claim to the Vanishing American in a manner that highlights not the possibility of Indian survival but the *fact of white survival* illustrated by the Indian's disappearance. By engaging with the logic of survival, these speakers implicate white sovereignty as the double of the Indian disappearance.[8] Achille Mbembe, following Elias Canetti, describes survivor logic as how "one's horror at the sight of death turns

[8] It is not surprising, then, that Jackson makes use of this trope after articulating a year earlier that the issue at the heart of the Cherokee/Georgia conflict is in fact state and national sovereignty: "A portion, however, of the Southern tribes, having mingled much with the whites and made some progress in the arts of civilized life, have lately attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia and Alabama. These States, claiming to be the *only sovereigns within their territories*, extended their laws over the Indians, which induced the latter to call upon the United States for protection" (60, emphasis added).

into satisfaction that it is someone else who is dead. It is the death of the other, his or her physical presence as a corpse, that makes the survivor feel unique. And each enemy killed makes the survivor feel more secure" (36). Survival thus opens up a state of exception, one in which the survivor surpasses death in that he or she "having stood in the path of death, knowing of many deaths and standing in the midst of the fallen, is still alive" (36). The survivor is the one left to mourn and so the spectacle of mourning for the Other is an assertion of difference from and sovereignty over that Other. The Native American community is, in funerary language, *survived by* the white American population; at the center of this spectacle is not the suffering object but those who follow the advice of Bancroft's *History of the United States* and, in looking backward, "drop a tear."[9] In the land of the fallen, tears confirm simultaneously that those for whom you mourn are dead and that you yourself are still alive.[10]

[9] Bancroft's *History*, published between 1834-1874 says of the Vanishing Indian: "The weak demand sympathy. If a melancholy interest attaches to the fall of a hero, who is overpowered by superior force, shall we not drop a tear at the fate of nations, whose defeat foreboded the exile, if it did not indeed shadow forth the decline and ultimate extinction of a race?"(236). Bancroft's tome was incredibly popular and well received. Emerson called the work "a noble matter, and I am heartily glad to have it nobly treated" (quoted in Howe and Strippel 107).

[10] Jackson continues to imagine "Philanthropy's" response, saying that this noble sentiment would not wish for a restoration. He says: "What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms… occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people." Jackson's response to lack, to foreground the population boom and therefore overwhelming presence of the white American community, emphasizes again the survivor logic at work in this rhetoric. Here, Jackson directly opposes both numbers as well as their qualifiers. Jackson counts the indigenous population as "a few," while the "happy people" that replaced them are estimated at "more than," thus lending to the numbers themselves a feeling of depletion followed by a swelling or excess (60).

## II. La Patria Ha Muerto. ¡Viva la patria!

While in North America, and in particular New England, the Native American disappeared without a trace in order to make way for the white American population, the creole intellectuals who were preparing for and stabilizing the Independence movements in Latin America were finding traces of a heroic Amerindian past everywhere and prophesying its return. In Spanish America, creole patriotism, as critics commonly label this movement, prepared the way for these new nations by asserting the continuity of indigenous claims to land and the restoration of an autochthonous culture. The Vanishing American trope in North America, while heraldic in its elegiac posturing, does not attempt to locate or resuscitate the lost indigenous culture, but creole patriotism saw revolution as restoration, using the Native history of the land in order to legitimize their native claims to it.

Historian David Brading argues that the creole patriot movement first gained ground in the colonial period as an assertion of an important *Spanish* heritage. These creole elites used their families' claims to the Conquistadors themselves as an argument for increasing their political power in the colonial hierarchy. This was an argument for separation from the peninsular Spaniards in degree, rather than kind. The creole's functional limitation within the government, they argued, was based on a false distinction between the *españoles europeos* and the *españoles americanos*. These are not categories that mark a difference in kind but rather a shared primary *patria*. They are, as the noun/adjective structure indicates, *españoles* first. As the latter type of Spaniard, they argued, they even held a stronger claim to governance as their families made colonization possible through conquest. Conquest, not residence or nativity, girded their claims to power. "Behind this return to history," Brading argues, "lay the bitter grievance that the creole

had been deprived of his rightful inheritance – the government of a kingdom conquered by his ancestors" (39). The patriotic movement began, then, as a concern about the past and the artificial rupture of family lines, a laying of claims to history and to the dead. But as the movement for independence grew stronger after the Napoleonic invasion of 1808, this rhetoric turned back on itself and discovered a new and yet ancient political inheritance in the pre-Columbian native empires.

Instead of being sons of Cortés, the creole patriots now proclaimed themselves to be the sons of "Moctehuzoma, Caeamatzin, Cuauhtimotzin, Xicotencalt and of Catzonzi" (Orozco y Berra 647). In the opening speech of the 1813 Congreso de Chilpancingo, where revolutionaries in Mexico proclaimed their independence, General José María Morelos delivered a speech written by Carlos Maria Bustamante, a speech that develops this newfound paternity into old claims of inheritance. In it, the patriot calls upon the indigenous fathers listed above and links their historical struggle to the contemporary one:

> Celebrad, como celebrasteis el mitote en que fuisteis acometidos por la pérfida espada de Alvarado, este dichoso instante en que vuestros hijos se han reunido para vengar vuestros desafueros y ultrajes, y liberarse de las garras de la tiranía y fanatismo que los iba á sorber para siempre. Al 12 de agosto de 1521 succedió el 14 de setiembre de 1813. En aquel se apretaron las cadenas de nuestra servidumbre en México Tenoxtitlan; en éste, se rompen para siempre en el venturoso pueblo de Chilpanzingo.

> Celebrate, as you celebrated the mitote[11] where you were taken by the treacherous sword of Alvarado, this happy moment in which your sons have come together to avenge your wrongs and outrages, and to liberate you from the clutches of tyranny and fanaticism that were going to swallow you forever. From August 12, 1521 follows September 14, 1813. On that [day] the chains of our slavery in Mexico were fastened; on this one they broke forever in the happy town of Chilpancingo.[12]

Bustamante, the son of a Spaniard, declares not simply independence but restoration, finding in his contemporary scene an ancient power struggling against a foreign invader. The years of colonization (and consequently the origins of the creole elite) disappear in the unspoken years between 1521 and 1813 and this ellipse allows "vuestros" [your] outrages to become "nuestra" [our] slavery. The body that vanishes here is that of the *español americano*, as the nineteenth century becomes a reiteration of the sixteenth and the contest for independence is recalled as the familiar struggle between *indio* and *Conquistador*. The creole patriot declares himself an avenging son and so acts *in place of* the Indian and, through this mediation of revenge, assumes the Indian's claim to the land and its attendant sovereignty, the object of contestation. Unlike in

[11] An Amerindian dance/celebration. This word derives the Nahua *mitoti* or dancer ("Mitote").
[12] All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. It is important for the reader to understand that the translations I created were done in the interest of conserving diction rather than searching for equivalent familiar phrasing in English. The language chosen in the original is important to my readings of the text so I have worked to preserve the original as much as possible in translation, making some of the English clunky and far from the poetic strains of the original texts. By taking on the task of the translator, I have also minimized the number of voices intervening in the text.

North America, where claims to land and sovereignty were predicated on vacancy, the Spanish American situation here relies on the (re)affirmation of pre-colonial Native states.

Several historians and critics have argued that the creole patriotism described above is limited to areas like Mexico and Peru, areas with extensive and documented Indian pasts, witnessed by the *conquistadores* in their chronicles and present in the text of their grand ruins. But there is evidence that other areas with strong independence movements but limited Indian histories, such as Argentina, also shared in this patriotic nativism (König; Earle "Creole Patriotism"). A prominent example is the "Marcha Patriotica," adopted as the Argentine national anthem in 1813. Its author, Vicente López y Planes, who would later become President, if only for a month in 1827, opens the anthem with the sound of breaking chains, "el ruido de rotas cadenas," implying, as Bustamante would in Mexico, that the metaphor for the creole's oppression is yet another iteration of the actual slavery endured by the Indian at the hands of the Spaniard. He then connects Argentina explicitly to areas more closely associated with a heroic Indian past when he invokes the suffering of Mexico, Quito, Potosí, Cochabamba and La Paz (l. 37-39), setting up this comparison by introducing the figure of the ancient Inca into the contemporary struggle. In the second verse, López moves quickly from classical allusion, "De los nuevos campeones los rostros/Marte mismo parece animar" [The faces of the new champions seem to be animated by Mars] (l. 13-14) to the resurrection of the lost Native. "Se conmueven," he writes, "del Inca las tumbas/Y en sus huesos revive el ardor,/ Lo que ve renovando a sus hijos/De la Patria el antiguo esplendor" [The tombs of the Inca rumble/and their bones revive the ardor/[the ardor]that renews their children/of the *Patria* the ancient splendor] (l. 17-20). Like Bustamante in Mexico, López y Planes places the creole patriot in a filial relationship with the

ancient Indian, shifting his inheritance from European conquest to the "ancient splendor" of the land itself, the *Patria* that is now quite literally his *father's land*. But the renaissance, the rebirth of Native sovereignty, recalls the death, the dwelling in tombs, of the sovereign himself. Like Bustamante, this filial connection requires a unique relationship with time, one that forgets to remember difference and so eases the identification across a long chronological gap. Here, the creole, the "hijos" of the ancient Inca, are *re*newed by the *ancient* splendor, an action that is both a return and a pressing forward, an appearance, again, of what once was that allows the subject to break from his current condition. Just as Bustamante's ellipse recreates the creole's struggle in the figure of the exemplary *indio*. Here, the past and the future work together in a way that represses the present and thus the revolutionary rupture of independence.

The move toward independence was therefore not a violent break with tradition but rather the result of a long struggle against always-foreign powers and the return of states whose own origins seemed *immemorial*.[13] Such collapsing of temporal and racial distinction accomplishes two crucial tasks for the creole: it legitimizes the claim to an independent state by providing it with a pre-Columbian foundation and it separates the creole from the Spaniard who is exorcised as a foreigner and usurper of power. If, as Nicolas Shumway and others have argued "The Spanish colonies were carefully designed to extend the Spanish Empire…they were not intended to develop a unique and independent sense of nationhood, but to be extensions of Spain" (3), then this rhetoric creates a "sense of separateness" for the creole (Earle "Creole Patriotism" 129),

[13] Literally unable to be written. In the preface to his *Historia Antigua de México* (1780), Francisco Javier Clavijero (S.J.) argues that, because of the loss of historical artifacts, writing the history of Mexico was a task he deemed "difícil, si no de imposible ejecución" (v). Clavijero's history was influential to the creole patriot movement and was an early example of the elevation of Pre-Columbian indigenous societies as complex, advanced civilizations.

the space in which to assert his difference. In Spanish America then, Indianism also flourished as the means by which to assert creole claims to a homeland, but seemed, superficially at least, to resurrect what the North American would banish, to reanimate those who, in texts such as Follen's poem, remain mute in face of their own removal. These patriots did not deny death to the Amerindian, but rather denied the finality of death. Mortality was frustrated by the survivors, themselves postured as the *traces* of the Indian past. Through the creole, the Indian lived again.

Emphasizing this resurrection, the Inca that rumbles in his grave in López y Planes' verse finds his voice in Jose Joaquin de Olmedo's epic poem "Victoria de Junín: Canto a Bolívar" (1825). Olmedo, a fervent patriot, who also served briefly as President (of Ecuador from March-December, 1845), wrote the poem to commemorate the eponymous victory and to rally the sometimes-ambivalent Peruvian elite behind Bolívar and the fight for independence.[14] But while the efforts of the creole leader are the nominal focus of the poem, the majority of the lengthy work (it stretches 20 pages of his anthology) is consumed by the appearance and prophetic address of Huayna-Capac, an Inca king who ruled from 1485 to 1525. The Inca's appearance in the poem marks a stark change from the dark, chaotic opening that depicts the battle itself. The poem begins with the rumbling sounds of thunder, "El trueno horrendo que en fragor revienta / y sordo retumbando se dilata / por la inflamada esfera" (122) [The horrible thunder that in crashing bursts / and deafening rumbling swells through the inflamed realm]. This aural 'shock and awe' is reinforced by the 'r'-based consonant clusters and alveolar trill of trueno, horrendo, fragor, revienta and retumbando. When, in the opening of the second stanza, the reader locates herself

[14] The area that comprised the Viceroyalty of Peru was a stronghold for royalists and remained under Spanish control during the Peninsular War. (See for example Lynch, Fisher, Cotler)

on the battlefield with "el *rayo* que en Junín *rompe* y ahuyenta la hispana muchedumbre" (emphasis added), the cacophonous rumble has already set the stage for the chaotic, unstable scenes of war. In contrast to the swelling, rumbling and deafening crashes of this opening scene, the Inca appears when "ya cesa el mal y el llanto de la tierra" (133) [now ends the evil and the cries of the earth], during the brief respite provided by victory. Against the dark chaos of the battle, the skies take on a markedly different appearance, an "éter / allá lejos purísimo aparece, / y en rósea luz bañado resplandece. / Cuando improviso, veneranda sombra, / en faz serena y ademán augusto, / entre cándidos nubes se levanta" (133-134). The rumbling sky becomes a pure ether [éter), and in the glow of a rosy light (en rósea luz) the venerable shade (veneranda sombra), serene and august, is lifted by light clouds. This shadow, before he can introduce himself to the gathered troops as Huayna-Capac, already appears as a stable, peaceful figure and so by his influence over the environment brings with him the hope of balance and harmony disrupted by the "hispana muchedumbre" [Spanish crowd]. This is not the figure of conflict; the Inca is not "Marte" (Mars), the god of war referenced earlier in the poem. Instead, Huayna-Capac is the promise of peace found in victory, the peace for which the troops had clamored ("Victoria , paz –clamaban-, / paz para siempre) (133). In his notes that accompany the poem, Olmedo remarks that he chose Huayna-Capac specifically because he reigned during a period of stability and unity, saying "los demás reinaron en un reino dividido, agitados siempre de guerras civiles o encadenados por los españoles" (134) [the rest reigned over a divided realm, continuously agitated by civil wars or chained by the Spanish]. If, then, Huayna-Capac is the vision of a future harmony for the creole *independentista*, the use of a historical figure to presage

this signifies not so much a revolutionary break with colonial disorder but rather a return of a pre-colonial edenic State.

Huayna-Capac makes this connection between the past and future explicit as he hails those on the field at Junín as his sons: "Hijos –decía- / generación del sol afortunado, / que con placer yo puedo llamar mía" (134) [Sons – he said- / generation of the forturnate sun / that with pleasure I call my own]. Not only are these men declared to be the sons of the Inca, but Huayna-Capac's possessive implicates his role in their generation read as procreative or productive creation. Instead of the creole harkening back to an indigenous father, here we have the Inca answering back and confirming their relationship. Here, the Incan King is quite literally the seminal figure for independence. Huayna-Capac also marks a clear distinction between the creole and their Spanish opponents. Promptly after addressing these men as his "hijos," the Inca laments "tres centurias de maldición" (134), condemning the Spanish as both usurpers and blasphemers (135). In contrast to these charges, the victorious at Junín are his avengers, those who bring justice and glory to his people ("la vengaza y gloria de mi pueblo" 136). In this way the Inca bookends his introduction onto the scene with an identification with the creole population, interrupting these filiative assertions with the supporting insistence on his, and consequently *their* difference from the Spanish. Civically, the Inca argues, the Spanish have no legitimate claim as they are the "usurpador"(134), gaining power by murdering Native monarchs. "Los asesinos" (the murderers), Huayna-Capac calls the Spanish, committed countless horrific acts during those 300 years, and all for material gain [¡Tantos horrores y maldades tantas / por el oro que hollaban nuestras plantas!" 135). Even Spanish claims to legitmacy through their religious mission are undermined by the Inca as he asks ¿Qué religión? ¿la de

Jesús?...¡Blasfemos! / Sangre, plomo veloz, cadenas fueron / los sacramentos santos que trajeron" (135) (What religion? That of Jesus? Blasphemers! / Blood, flying shot (fleet lead), chains were / the holy sacraments that they brought]. In this rejection of Spanish colonial justifications, Huayna-Capac also bars any easy identification between the Spaniard and the creole. Even a shared religious identification is denied here as the Inca reveals that the Spaniard's Christianity is not a pure faith but one tainted by greed, violence, and superstition (135). The Inca thus stands *between* the Spaniard and the creole, illuminating their differences and claiming the latter as his own. This interpolation of the creole troop into his own family ("todos sois mis hijos!" 136), their victory into his own historical struggle, indicates that it is the Inca, not Bolívar, at the head of this patriot army. His leadership role is confirmed by the advice he gives to the soldiers and the prophecies he makes concerning their future. He exhorts the troops to courage and encourages them not to rest on this victory but continue the fight (133). His words of advice approach the rallying speeches of a military leader, and while he has praise for Bolívar, his rhetorical position seems to supplant that of the General. The famous leader is included in his address and not given a voice of his own. Instead, in the "Canto a Bolívar," it is Huayna-Capac who orates for fifteen pages. In Olmedo's poem, the voice of the Inca simply dominates the other figures. He speaks to the creole but also in his place, reversing the silencing moves of the vanishing trope in use in North America at the same time.

Finally, the Inca King's role as prophet concretizes his privilege as speaker. As a prophet, the Inca King stands between confusion and knowledge, the creole and his future. While Huayna-Capac tarries for verse after verse, condemning the Spanish while praising and urging on the creole, the reason for his appearance is the prophecy of *other* victories that await them,

"nueva lid, mayor victoria" (137) [a new struggle, a greater victory]. He depicts this future battle in detail for his audience and tells them it is at *that* battle at Ayacucho that their freedom will finally be won. Olmedo says in his notes to the poem, "En el campo de Ayacucho fué [sic] la célebre victoria que predice el Inca y que fijó los destinos de la America. En el mismo lugar, al principio de la Conquista, se disputaron los Almagros y Pizarros el dominio del Perú" (138) [On the field at Ayacucho was the celebrated victory that the Inca predicts, a victory that fixed the destinies of America. At the same location at the beginning of the Conquest, the Almagros and Pizarros (two factions of the Spanish conquering force) fought over who was to rule Peru]. The Indian's prophecy (already realized – fue – and part of shared history for Olmedo's audience in 1825) is notably a return to colonial beginnings, a revision of battles fought on the same ground previously and a restoration of sovereignty wrested from its indigenous inhabitants over three hundred years previously. The Inca and his kingdom may have passed away centuries ago, but in his creole counterparts he lives again and so his prophecy recalls the idea of monarchical continuity contained in the familiar phrase "El rey ha muerto. Viva el rey!" Like the death of the King, the insistent inheritability is simultaneously an acknowledgment of death and an assertion of continuity and permanence of the monarchical institution (Martín 6). While some critics see the recollection of the epic events of conquest as a parallelism to the epic events of revolution (Ianes 91), this recourse to an immemorial history can also be seen as a stabilizing force for the claims of independence, one that lends historical precedent so that revolution reads more like restoration. The victory at Junín, and the prophesied victory at Ayacucho are *already* presided over by the ruler/prophet who gives them form.

The power ceded to the figure of the prophet is mirrored by the *space* consumed by his lengthy address. This prophecy of return is the "objeto de su aparición" (147) [the object of his appearance] according to Olmedo's notes and the poet goes on to ask for his readers' forgiveness for his character, who despite his brief and direct task perhaps allowed his "vaticinio…demasiada extensión" [gave his prophecy excess length]. Acknowledging that Inca had carried on for quite a long period of time, the poet declares this to be the Inca's *right to speak*:

> Pero ¿no se perdonará a un Inca que antes de pronunciar el grande oráculo, objeto de su aparición, exhale algunas quejas al ver por la primera vez los lugares que fueron el teatro de los horrores de la Conquista? ¿No se perdonará a un buen padre y a un buen rey lamentar antes de todo la suerte de sus hijos y de su pueblo? ¿No se perdonará a un guerrero alentar el valor de las tropas con el recuerdo de agravios pasados, aunque sean sucesos muy conocidos de la historia de su país? ¿No se perdonará a un anciano el ser prolijo en sus discursos, y a un sabio de edad el no perder la ocasión de dar consejos a los hombres? ¿No se perdonará, en fin, a un sacerdote prolongar un tanto la expectación del pueblo al anunciar los oráculos del cielo? (147-48)
>
> But do you not forgive an Inca that, before pronouncing the great prophecy, the object of his appearance, extols his complaints on seeing for the first time the places that were the theater of horrors for the Conquest? Do you not forgive a good father and a good king for mourning above all the fate of his sons and his people? Do you not forgive a warrior building the courage of the troops with the

> memory of past wrongs, even well-known events in the history of his country? Do you not forgive an old man being verbose in his speeches, and a man wise with age the occasion to give advice to his fellow man? Do you not forgive, after all, a priest to prolong a bit the peoples' expectation at announcing the oracles of heaven?

The poet's lengthy defense of his ancient speaker is based on the repetition of the question "No se perdonará," a structure that echoes Follen's verse in its open questioning ("Where?") but differentiates itself significantly in that it address not a missing *elsewhere* but a present audience. It is the creole reader whom the questions implicate and it is his impatience at the length of the Inca's address that must be ameliorated. This figure, Olmedo's questioning insists, has the right to speak, and the right to speak at length. In this way the physical expanse of the poem itself stands in for the figure of the Inca, a figure that must make himself known, whose redress requires address, the *presence* of a voice. His physicality thus becomes irrepressible for the reader who must forgive, must welcome him into his space. Because of his prominence, the Inca here seems not simply to stand between the creole and the Spaniard, but to supplant the *criollo* altogether. The Inca's dominance leads to Bolívar's response to the poem: "El Inca…parece que es el asunto del poema: él es el genio, él es la sabiduría, él es el héroe, en fin" (quoted in C. F. Smith 212) [The Inca seems to be the subject of the poem; he is the genius, he is the sage, he is, in the end, the hero]. Bolívar's complaint is marked by a persistent 'he is,' 'he is,' 'he is,' leaving no space for the asserting his own identity.

But while Spanish American independence claims are postured here as a restoration of fallen Amerindian empires, they were, in reality, the province of the elite creole class, the

product of Spanish colonization. Hans-Joachim König writes that "La dedicación al pasado indio fue un deseo criollo de los españoles americanos, es decir, de aquellos que si bien pertenecían, con los españoles europeos, a una misma clase alta blanca" (König 748) [The dedication to the Indian past was a creole desire on the part of the Spanish Americans, that is, of those that belonged, along with the peninsular Spaniards, to the same white upper class]. Thus while these creoles sought to establish new independent governments, they also sought to maintain much of the same social structure as their colonial counterparts. In this regard, the formation of newly independent states sought to conserve much of the economic and social disparity established by the Spanish power, a power which their own rhetoric declared as foreign and corrupt. Bolívar, it seems, understood this irreconcilable tension between rhetoric and realities when he protested the prominence of the Amerindian king. While contemporaneous reviewers like writer and statesman Andrés Bello considered the Inca's appearance to be "la parte más espléndida y animada de su canto"(quoted in C. F. Smith 212) [the most splendid and animated of the song], Bolívar cautioned against an over-reliance on such tropes. Olmedo, Bolívar insisted, had made of the Inca "un coloso," a colossus that "cubre con su sombra a los demás personajes" (quoted in Bernal Medina 120) [overshadows the other characters]. Bolívar's protest, that the Indian covers everyone with his shadow, indicates the threat to the subject posed by identification. Freud details this power of the lost object in his essay "Of Mourning and Melancholia." The melancholic relationship is described as an incorporative one in which an identification is produced between the subject's ego and the lost object. "The shadow of the object," Freud says, falls upon the ego, becomes part of the subject's self-identification (Freud 209). The Inca, Bolívar protests, threatens to consume the creole completely and exposes the subject to other

dangerous identifications with the contemporary subaltern Indian communities. It doesn't seem appropriate, *El Libertador* complained, that the Inca gives preference to the *criollos*, to the "extranjeros intrusos, que, aunque vengadores de su sangre, siempre son descendientes de los que aniquilaron su imperio" (quoted in Minguet 64) [foreign invaders, that, despite being avengers of his blood, are always descendants of those who annihilated his empire]. Bolívar thus refuses the amnesia required by the identification of creole with Inca; against the oppressive "he is" that threatens his own annihilation, Bolívar resists by articulating filial ties to the Spanish. We are – we *always* are – descendants of the Conquistador, not the Inca; we are – *siempre* – the "extranjeros intrusos."

But perhaps Bolívar's rejection of the Inca prophet is a bit too hasty. If we look beyond Olmedo's overt attempts to identify the struggle for independence with the resistance to conquest, we can see how this anxiety regarding identification with indigenous communities is already contained within the text self. Beyond the dreamscape of his appearance, Olmedo's Inca also displaces his relationship to the "hijos" he addresses by lamenting the fate of his *actual* sons, the unfortunate Atahualpa and Huáscar for whom he mourns (134-135), for whom, Olmedo's lengthy justification implies, he *must* mourn or must be allowed to mourn. Against the image of the creole as "vengador," then, rises the specter of the son and the rupture of inheritance or filial continuity. Simultaneous with the Inca's assertion of patriarchy is the tacit acknowledgement of the end of his line in the death of his sons. This can be seen in the assertion, made by both the Inca himself and the poet in his explanatory notes, that Huayna-Capac is the last of his kind. "Yo soy Huayna-Capac," the Inca tells his audience, "soy el postrero / del vástago sagrado" [I am Huayna-Capac, I am the last of the sacred family], the poet seconding his

assertion by calling him "el último"(134). Olmedo's poem thus participates in the "lasting" described by Orians in his Vanishing American thesis. Here, as in the North American texts, the assertion of his last-ness is a legible sign of his sterility, his inescapable and profound loss (both of his own material body as well as any remaining signs of self), and his inability to identify with the surviving community. As the Inca works to consume the creole and thus annihilate the difference between them, the reader is also reminded that the bodies on the field of victory are *not* his, not of his blood, of which no trace remains. This spectralization of the father emphasizes the phantasmical nature of their relationship and therefore renders it tenuous, unable to withstand any rigorous interrogation.

This sterility also distances the historical Huayna-Capac from the contemporary Indian population, barring any easy translation of the creole-Inca identification into a *criollo-indio* one. The vengeance Huayna-Capac requests is for the blood of his own ancient family of rulers, not the sufferings of the contemporaneous indigenous population, about which he remains silent.[15] This "quietism" evinces a common distinction exploited by the rhetoric of creole nationalism between the historical community they lauded and the contemporary one that remained by in large unincorporated into the independent states. Historian Rebecca Earle calls this refusal of the contemporary Indian in the celebration of the indigenous past the "double discourse on the

[15] A level of distinction implied here, one which space disallows a thorough investigation, is the class-based identification implied by the lost savage trope. Several critics have noted that recuperated Native figures are most frequently kings, sachems and other characters of a recognizably aristocratic social standing. This would serve as an obvious distinction for nineteenth-century creoles, as contemporary indigenous populations were then (as they continue in many ways to this day) severely limited in their financial resources or their ability to function in colonial and postcolonial economic markets. The recuperative function of the noble savage, it seems, was his very nobility.

Indian" ("Creole Patriotism" 133). In contrast to the ancient glory of the Incas or Aztecs, Earle argues, "contemporary Indians…were dirty, degraded and, infinitely worse, just as likely to support the royalists as they were to support their metaphorical cousins, the insurgents" (133). This double standard was provided for, not by the rhetoric of exile and disappearance, as in North America, but of conditional degeneration. The contemporary *indios*, the creole patriot argued indignantly, was irreparably cut off from his noble heritage by the intervening period of colonial slavery and corruption. What results from this doubled discourse is a similarly doubled concept of time. At the same time the colonial period banished from memory in order to facilitate creole identification with a pre-Columbian indigenous past, it was forwarded as an irreversible and lengthy period of corruption for the surviving Native population. "The degradation of the Indian to the state in which we see him today" Colombian patriot José Francisco de Caldas argued, "is the work of the oppressor government that has brutalized us for three consecutive centuries" (quoted in Earle "Creole Patriotism" 133). At the same time the colonial period vanished with the reappearance of the historical Indian, the creole patriot also relied on his endurance of colonial violence in order to bolster his claims to independence and erase the present *indio*. This trope is often summed up, even during the early national periods of the mid-nineteenth century (Earle "Padres"), in complaints such as Caldas' that the American had suffered for 300 years. While the colonial period is forgotten in the assertion of a direct inheritance from the Ameridian "fathers," it is memorialized as the immense span of traumatic time, the endurance of which marks the creole, not the Indian, as the survivor and so the claimant of the survivor's rights/rites to the deceased. As historican Cecilia Méndez argues in "Incas sí, Indios no," "El indio es, pues, aceptado en tanto paisaje y gloria lejana…Apelar a la memoria de

los Incas para despreciar y segregar el indio" (12) [The Indian is, then, accepted as long as he is a distant glory and landscape...Appealing to the memory of the Incas was a way to despise and segregate the Indian]. This doubled rhetoric reconciles somewhat the two nationalist projects of the Vanishing American and creole Patriotism. Despite the laudatory tendencies of the latter, its connection to the lost civilization is predicated upon the very attribute of its being irrecoverable and thus the assertion of mourning in both discourses functions as a confirmation and celebration of loss itself, and thus a vacancy on which they can build their own sovereignty. "Las culturas indígenas fueron reconocidas," critic Raul Ianes write, "sólo en calidad de un sustrato históricamente cancelado" (95) [indigenous cultures were recognized only as a historically canceled substrate]. This is, as Charles Minguet terms it, a "patriotismo arqueológico (64) (archaeological patriotism) in which the national character is predicated upon, not Indian realities, but the narratives invented for the traces that the creole resurrects and perpetuates as textual artifacts. The Indian thus becomes an artifact of history, an object of knowledge that's value is predicated upon the temporal distance from and thus loss of the living original.

One can see this diminishment in Olmedo's poem, as the urging by the Inca for restoration exists in tension with the Inca's own self-negation and erasure. Despite his overwhelming presence and prophecy of independence as the return of indigenous sovereignty, the Inca insists that the creole *not* re-establish the Incan political state. After insisting that here begins the new age promised to the Inca, "Esta es la hora feliz. Desde aquí empieza / la nueva edad al Inca prometida" (143), the Native prophet asks that this new age *not* renew the Incan reign. "No quisiera/" the Inca says, "que el cetro de los Incas renaciera" (143) (I would not want the Incan scepter to be reborn]. After condemning the Spanish for cruelty in conquest and

corruption in their Christianity, the Inca chooses to indict his own state, and, because he was king, himself as well, when advising the creole on achieving independence. "Ya se vió algún Inca," he says, "que teniendo / el terrible poder todo en su mano,/ comenzó padre y acabó tirano. / Yo fuí conquistador, ya me avergüenzo / del glorioso y sangriento ministerio" (143-44) (Already one has seen an Inca that having the terrible power in his hand began as father and ended as tyrant. I was a conqueror, now I am ashamed of the glorious and bloody ministry]. Not only is the tyranny against which the creoles fight the province of the Spanish but it is also the province of their venerable Indian fathers. In the confessional moment of "Yo fui conquistador," even the colossus that speaks is severed from his audience by explicitly identifying with the culpable and representatively *Spanish* figure. In a perverse echo of the original creole patriotism, it is the *Inca* who declares his identification with the *conquistador*. In cautioning these *independentistas* against tyrannical possibilities of their own, the Inca indicates the limitations of the identifications they would foster between the living and the dead.

This limitation is emphasized by the indigenous prophet's corporeal exclusion, his confinement to the realm of spirits. The Inca appears on a battlefield and in his revelations he sees more, prophesying future violent contests. These are scenes of action and their requirements upon the subject (to battle or be lost) emphasizes the Inca's own inability to act. The Indian, consigned to the realm of spirits, can only foresee the work done by others, even if imagined done on his behalf. When the Inca sees the sacrifice of lives Ayacucho will require, he laments his own inability to stop it. After witnessing to the blood sacrifice, the Inca calls out "¡Yo me estremeciera si mi ser inmortal no lo impedirla!" (I shudder that my immortal being cannot stop it] (138). The power of the seer is thus revealed to be a passive one; barred from participating in

the struggle, the Inca is confined to the role of the spectator. In this way the Inca, present as a spirit, still remains exiled from active realization and so speaks from a distance, removed much like Follen's Sachem from the present/presence of the contemporary white community. The insistence on the Indian as *historical* here works to privilege the corporeal present that acts on his behalf. The creole here dies for the Inca because the Inca, being already dead, cannot act on his own behalf. The passivity of his state requires him to take on the debt of the creole's sacrifice and so, reversing the mournful posture of the patriot toward the historical Indian community, the imagined future death of the creole becomes itself a mournful wail.

The removal of the Indian from the realm of action facilitates the transition fo the Creole from mediatory figure working on behalf of Native sovereignty, to sovereign himself. As he progresses in his speech, the Inca indicates this switch as he begins to address Bolívar specifically. After communicating his vision of victory, the Inca emphasizes that he does not own or is not responsible for this glory. Instead, the Inca proclaims, "Tuya será, Bolívar, esta gloria, / tuya romper el yugo de los reyes" (145) (Yours will be, Bolívar, the glory,/Yours to break the yoke of the kings]. The second-person possessive is emphasized here not only by word choice (*tuya*), but also the repetition and placement of the emphatic possessive at the beginning of successive lines. Bolívar, here, is not in the shadow of the Inca, but has himself consumed the indigenous patrimony. When the Inca proclaims to Bolívar that "Tu la salud y horror de nuestro pueblo serás viviendo" (You will be the living health and honor of our people], he gives corporeal form to independence, ceding "nuestro pueblo" to the body of *El Libertador*.

The creole patriot is thus celebrating and at the same time exorcising a *lost* Native heritage, a mourning that barred its identification with contemporary Indians even as it worked

affectively to distinguish a cultural heritage distinct from the Spanish, whose cruelty caused this loss to take place. This distinction between historical and contemporary indigenous populations made it possible for sovereignty to provide impetus for revolution and yet achieve this independence "without radically altering relations between the state and the indigenous population (Walker 276). This reluctant embrace of the Indian belies the tension at the heart of creole's project: the identification with a group that has to die at the moment of your origin, a community that has to die in order to cede its place to you.

**III. "Ha de Venir": The Fatal Book of Destiny**

In 1826, the historical romance *Jicoténcal* was published anonymously in Philadelphia. For years it was considered by scholars to be the first historical romance to be written in Spanish, an honor it has since conceded to *Ramiro, conde de Lucena* (1823, Banquero Arribas 125). But *Jicoténcal*'s early appearance was unusual as the genre, while extremely popular in North America at the time, did not become popular in Spanish-language literature and in particular in the publishing markets of the Latin America until the middle and latter half of the century. The romance was also the first to take as its subject the era of conquest in the New World and so, as critic Mercedes Banquero Arribas argues "nos coloca en una situación privilegiada para observar el nacimiento de la interpretación de la conquista de América en el romanticismo" (128) [gives us a privileged vantage point from which to observe the birth of the interpretation of the conquest of America in Romanticism], an important viewpoint because considerations of conquest became an incredibly popular topic in the early national romance. In Naomi Lindstrom's words, "During this period of intense literary nationalism, writers frequently revisited the events of the Spanish

conquest and the period of colonization in search of national origins…Accounts of the conquest and of early interactions between Spaniards and native peoples came into vogue" (Lindstrom 2). *Jicoténcal* was itself was quite popular and gave rise to several imitators, even inspiring a dramatic festival in Puebla dedicated to its themes and characters. But while it inspired imitations of its own (McPheeters 408), the novel can also be read as an artifact of the already-popular Indianist rhetoric of the creole patriotism. In this way, while the early appearance of the book makes it influential, it was also only the first in a popular genre developing out of the tropes of Indianist nationalism. In the historical romance, the rhetoric of creole patriotism transforms from an intervention of a heroic indigenous past in contemporary situations to a more detailed narrative investigation of that past itself. But in its historical setting, the Indianist historical romance doesn't cease to be a presentist fantasy. *Jicoténcal*, in its discussion of the past, effects much the same definitional work as Bustamante's speeches and Olmedo's flowery prose.

The novel's subject is Mexican, focusing on the eponymous Tlacalan general, but its author, critics would later conclude, was Cuban, the exiled priest Félix Varela who was living at the time in Philadelphia and publishing pro-independence newspapers.[16] The romance promotes the identification of the postcolonial republics with an Indian predecessor, the heroic

[16] This is not a conclusion based solely on the coincidence of location. Several recent critics have supported this claim with detailed analyses of diction and orthography (Leal) as well as philosophical arguments made in the text itself (Garland). Leal and Cortina were so convinced of their conclusion that their edited version of the text proclaims Varela's authorship on the cover. These investigations, it is interesting to note in terms of the project at hand, are themselves excavations that find traces of the author in the text itself, discovering that even the linguistic construction of historical texts bear the impression of the creator. For the purposes of this study, I assume the validity of these impressive studies and, when referring to the author of *Jicoténcal*, I am speaking of Varela.

Tlascaltecan Jicoténcal and his noble wife Teutila, with their fervent patriotism, proto-Christianity and republican values. Jicotencal and Teutila thus emerge from the romance as familiar/family figures, whose values and struggles are echoes of the present-day Creole, the anticipation in the indigenous past of a *criollo* future. The novel thus participates in the work of disentangling the creole from Spanish filiation and legitimizing his claims to a native sovereignty. The identification of the nineteenth-century reader with the long-dead Tlascaltecans is encouraged on three fronts: the geographical, the religious and the political. These affiliations, made through shared connections to land, values and state allow the creole reader to find traces of himself in the young Tlascalan general and his wife, indigenous roots that allow him to identify creole nationalism as an indigenous patriotism. But the romance also demonstrates an anxiety regarding the consuming forces of identification and so maintains an important site of difference from the indigenous community that it lauds, a distance granted by its mournful position that insists on barring a contemporary identification of patriot with Indian. Within the narrative of Native heroism and sacrifice, there is a persistent caution against a hospitable exposure to the other, as contact becomes darkened by violent consumption and erasure. The native couple that seems to pose as sentimental ancestors is ultimately frustrated in its attempt to create an inheritance, and the affinitive networks that would raise the couple as ancient patriarchs of creole independence is subverted by their sterility, both in life and in death. Finally, the narrative's insistent textuality reinforces the reduction of Native presence to a textual commodity, evincing an epistemological connection between the discourses of the Vanishing American and creole patriotism. Here, as in the laments of Follen and Sedgwick, the Native is reduced to a textual figure, circulated among a literary community whose consuming of it

reinforces its own position. By looking at the novel's contradictory discourses of affinitive networks and contamination of contact, as well as the sanitary work of textual circumscription, we can see how the Indianist fantasies of these national tropes simultaneously celebrated and eliminated indigenous claims to land and state, how they worked upon national history as a necropolitics that cleared the ground for creole habitation.

Like Olmedo's ethereal Inca, Varela's narrator and characters pay careful attention to the uniquely American landscape in a way that simultaneously asserts a filial familiarity and an exotic estrangement. The land is rough, marked by canyons and mountains. It is a landscape that overwhelms the foreigner, besieging them with storms that force a comparison between the vulnerability of the European and the capable control of the *americano.* It is in one of these storms that the soldier Diego de Ordaz and Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo meet Teutila, the woman who will marry Jicoténcal and emerge as the romance's heroine. The two had been discussing the former's reservations regarding their mission when the environment rebels against them. Suddenly, they are assaulted by a great storm and forced to seek shelter from the swelling rivers. The narrator describes a threatening scene: "Las nubes casi sobre su cabeza oscurecen enteramente el horizonte, el agua cae a torrentes, y, a los pocos pasos, un caobo tan antiguo como el mundo estalla y se incendia por el fuego de un rayo" (14) [The clouds, almost over their heads darkened the entire horizon, the water fell in torrents, and, a few feet away, a mahogany tree as old as the world exploded, bursting into flames from a lightning strike]. The thunder, lightning, torrential rain and surrounding fire are all signs of hostility from the sky and mark the New World as dangerous and inhospitable to these men; it attempts to expel them and they answer by running away. The two men are discovered by Teutila who shelters them from the

storm, saying "Vuestro temor manifiesta vuestra flaqueza, y ésta os hace dignos de compasión. Entrad" (14) [Your fear shows your weakness and that makes you worthy of compassion. Enter]. In contrast to their fear, Teutila demonstrates "serenidad"; in the midst of their chaotic and dangerous expulsion, they find her in her comfortable home. When Teutila offers to guide the pair back to their camp, for fear of them getting lost, she again emphasizes her familiarity with the landscape and its potential to overpower these strangers. She says, "Os conduciré hasta cerca de Jacacingo, porque temo que os extravíes estando tan próxima la noche" (15) [I will guide you almost to Jacacingo because I fear that you will go astray, the night being so close]. The effect of this encounter is to establish the identificatory terms that will continue throughout the novel. The Spaniards, as Teutila addresses them, are "extranjeros" or strangers, foreigners, while she herself is "la americana," the American.[17] These definitional terms consolidate both the Spanish and indigenous divisions, secular and clerical, tribal and geographical, into a simple opposition based on the idea of nativity and homeland.

The religious distinction between the creole present and the historical indigenous community is also elided by the main characters' assertions of a natural monotheism that maintains Christian values while highlighting the hypocrisies of the Spanish Catholics. When Teutila saves the pair from the storm, the Priest, impressed by her generosity, decries the fact that she, as a pagan, does not know the source of these virtues. Teutila, taken aback by the

[17] It interesting to note, in addition to the chronological violation of *la americana* that reveals the voice of the narrator and his own historical context, the moment of contact is not attenuated by linguistic divisions. There is no translation necessary; communication between the parties is direct and immediately understood. Language, then, is not asserted as a definitional characteristic. See Chapter Four in this study for a discussion of the role language and translation play in the New World historical romance.

presumption of her guest, answers "vivamente" [animatedly] by demanding "Y quién te ha dicho, extranjero…que yo no adoro al autor de todo cuanto existe" (15) [And who has told you, stranger…that I don't adore the author of all that exists]. She declares that their Native ignorance of the Western world and its technologies does not mean that they have no knowledge of or respect for God. "Para conocer la existencia de un Ser que ha ordenado el sol y las estrellas y que preside a toda la naturaleza," she tells them, "basta no cerrar los ojos a lo que ésta nos dice continuamente" (16) [To know the existence of a Being who has arranged the sun and the stars and that presides over all of nature, it is enough not to close your eyes to that which [nature] continually tells us]. Teutila's monotheism, a knowledge of God garnered from the natural world, is echoed by other virtuous indigenous characters (such as Jicoténcal, the elder, in his recourse to the 'first cause that governs the world' 21) and offers a stark contrast not only to the polytheism of corrupt Amerindians like Magiscatzin but also the hypocrisies demonstrated by the Spanish troops and clergy. When Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo tells the elder Jicoténcal "somos hijos de un mismo Dios…debemos amar…a nuestros hermanos, que son todos hombres" [we are all sons of the same God…we should love….our brothers that are all men], the wise Tlascalan answers in surprise that while these words echo the feelings of his heart, "vuestras acciones son tan contrarias a estas mismas máximas" [your actions are so contrary to these same maxims] (83). Like Olmedo's Inca, the *americanos* of Varela's *Jicoténcal* find Spanish Catholicism blasphemous, "la monstruosa mezcla de las máximas más justas y más dulces con los hechos más atroces y más inicuos y de los discursos más profundos y delicados con los absurdos más necios y despreciables" (109) [the monstrous mixture of the most fair and sweet maxims with the most atrocious and wicked deeds, of the most profound and delicate discourses with the most

absurd and contemptible fools]. This dark contrast to their innocent spirituality furthers the identification of Native with creole reader, denying, as did Olmedo's work, the religious justification for colonial violence by relocating Christian values to the Amerindian population, a sign of difference from their European foes.

Finally, the present-day creole is linked with the indigenous past through the Tlascalan state, a political organization that is insistently referred to in the novel as a republic. Rather than the monarchical heritage of the Incan or Aztec communities, Varela's text focuses on Tlascala as a way to highlight indigenous resistence to absolutist power. The narrator speaks of "la igualdad que formaba el espíritu público del país" (4) [the equality that formed the public spirit of the country] and the selfless patriotism and dedication to independence demonstrated by its populace. "El espíritu nacional de los tlascaltecas," the narrator says, "era tan decidido que, careciendo éstos de sal, preferían vivir privados de este condimento a disfrutar de él abriendo relaciones comerciales con sus enemigos los vasallos de Montezuma" (5) [the national spirit of the Tlascaltecans was so strong that, having no salt, they preferred to live deprived of this condiment rather than have it by opening commercial relations with their enemies, the vassals of Montezuma]. This self-deprivation is a sacrifice made for the health of their political state, keeping them from the reaches of their imperial (and here, by the use of the term "vassals," feudal) neighbors. These are a people dedicated to their freedom, not individually but as a political community. Our eponymous hero represents this political idea and is surrounded in the text by overwhelming reminders of his patriotism. He is described by the narrator as a man of "puro y desinteresado patriotismo" (5) [pure and disinterested patriotism] and his own speeches and peppered with reminders of his devotion. His opening address to the Tlascalan *senado* is

"conducido por mi ardiente amor a la patria" (8) [driven by my ardent love of my country], and when he calls out in longing for Teutila, he first does so for his home: "¡oh patria mía!, tú, ¡mi adorada Teutila!, caros objectos de mi corazón" (23) [both objects of my heart]. The construction of Tlascala as an egalitarian republic is, according to critic D.W. McPheeters, "una ficción novelesca" (404), an understanding of indigenous society that has less to do with historical realities than it does with the deformed mirror of the historiography of creole patriotism. The *senado* described in Tlascala, though, serves to highlight the corruption and irrationality of the Spanish political state. The indigenous population marvel at the Spaniard's monarchical system, which they understand as concession to a distant tyrant. Even Cortés, in his local power, established in contrast to the Tlascalan representative and deliberative political bodies, is portrayed as illegitimate and possibly even disloyal. "Cortés tenía la fuerza de su parte, y sin ésta el gobierno no es más que un fantasma impotente y ridículo" (27) [Cortés had force on his side and without this the government is no more than an impotent and ridiculous ghost].

But even as the novel celebrates the familiar love of land, God and *patria*, fostering affiliative bonds between creole reader and Tlascalan community, it also offers a warning about the dangers of identification with or exposure to an Other. Teutila's hospitality, while virtuous, initiates the actions that lead to her captivity and Cortés's pursuit of Jicoténcal. Reacting to her offer to meet Cortés and mediate between him and Jicoténcal, the narrator declares that "La inocente americana corre a su pérdida con el mismo entusiasmo que si fuera a hacer feliz al mundo entero" (17) [The innocent American ran to her doom with the same enthusiasm as if she were to make the entire world happy]. Marina, the Amerindian slave who serves Cortés, laments her exposure to Catholicism as her conversion isolates her from her family and community and

perverts her natural sense of right and wrong. "Cuando yo seguía mi culto sencillo y puro, pues que salía de mi corazón,"she tells the Father Olmedo, "cuando yo era una idólatra, segun tú me llamabas, yo fui una mujer virtuosa" (109) [When I followed my simple and pure religion, it flowed from my heart; when I was an idolatress, as you would call me, I was a virtuous woman]. These women, in the liminal positions of ambassador and translator, are figures of contact between the two communities who each come under the influence of the Other to the detriment of their personal sovereignty. But even the Tlascalan state is vulnerable to this contamination through its hospitality and confederate structure. Against the physical walls that separate the state from its neighbors, "la gran muralla de piedra…señalando y fortificando los límites de la república de Tlascala" (28) [the great stone wall…marking and fortifying the limits of the Tlascalan republic], its confederacy with the neighboring Cempoalans allows Cortés to contaminate them by sending their allies as his spokesmen to the Tlascalan *senado*. The Cempoalan ambassadors ask that the *senado* consider the Europeans "bienhechores," and, already allies of their allies, they ask the Republic to accept the Europeans as part of their confederation. Through these native speakers, the Europeans ask for the considerations of hospitality, but, as "aliados de vuestros aliados," they have already become part of the confederate community. Speaking through the native body, the European has already transformed its project into a native one; by sending a native ambassador, the Spanish plea takes on a familiar form, four familiar forms. This infection of a familiar body with a foreign presence, already *in* Tlascala and in that way prior to (and thus not subject to) the approval of the Tlascaltecan assembly, reveals the exposure of their confederate community, the many ways their borders can be violated. Finally, by offering to represent the Tlascaltecan concerns in the

European stand against Montezuma and his empire [tomar por suya vuestra causa], Cortés moves to transform the representative body from the Indian ambassador to the European soldier (6). In taking the native cause as their own, the Europeans in turn become the native's ambassador. The imported figure consumes the indigenous concern, adopting it as his own and thus forging a bond of identification that is both prior to assent and ultimately spoken by the European. The romance, then, repeats in these various forms the anxiety surrounding the vulnerability of ego and community identifications through the very values and institutions that it deploys to protect them, through the definitions of difference based on home, religion and state. Modes of distinction, the novel tells us, also function as sites of exposure and so even as it encourages identification it admonishes the reader to fortify herself against this site of vulnerability.

The resulting degeneration of Tlascalan society takes the form of an infection or sickness from which the indigenous republic cannot recover. The exposure to and identification with the Other robs the Native of sovereignty, consuming him as it corrupts him, and this is made explicit in the twinned death scenes of Magiscatzin and the elder Jicoténcal. The former, the strongest ally of Córtes, foresakes land, religion and country and so dies in an **"**espectáculo horroroso" (109) [horrific spectacle] in which the criminal "muerde sus cadenas atado a un poste, y que rechina los dientes y se despedaza con sus propias uñas" (110) [chews at his chains tied to a post and grinds his teeth and tears at himself with his own nails]. Varela departs from his historical sources in depicting this spectacle of suffering, choosing not to depict Magiscatzin's death with the "olor de santidad" as did Antonio de Solís (McPheeters 407). Instead, Magiscatzin suffers and suffers terribly; in dying he leaves no one to mourn for him except Cortés himself, who does so only in farce (111-112). Directly following this terrifying scene is the beatific deathbed of

Jicoténcal's father, the only Tlascalan governor to resist incorporation into the new Spanish rule. The serenity and joy of his death is a stark contrast to the chaos and fear at Magiscatzin's house and as is the overwhelming procession of mourners against the "farsa." The consuming force of the Spanish, its colonial contamination, this juxtaposition seems to argue, takes over death as much as life.[18]

This Spanish power over the lives and deaths of the Amerindian people inscribes upon them a structure of servitude that annuls their claims to home, religion and political sovereignty. But the Amerindian is not merely the victim, the narrator declares, but rather is himself culpable in his refusal to resist. When he first heard Cortés's ambassadors present the Spaniard's offer of friendship to the Tlascalan *senado*, the elder Jicoténcal understood the message to be "Yo vengo a esclavizaros a vosotros vuestro pensamiento, vuestros hijos y vuestra descendencia; vengo a destruir vuestro culto y a haceros apostatar de vuestra religión" (10) [I come to enslave you, your thinking, your children and your descendants; I come to destroy your culture and make you renounce your religion]. But despite this revelation of their future, the community ceded to Cortés's demands, welcomed the foreign power and, when the results turned grim, still refused to act against it. Because of this the narrator displaces the responsibility for conquest and colonial submission onto the Native population, saying that "ese pueblo sufre justamente sus cadenas" (120) [That people justly suffered their chains]. Moving away from the vilification of the

[18] In this instance, one could expand the definition of sovereignty offered by Mbembe (following Foucault) that "To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality" (11), and argue that here the exercise of sovereignty is not merely over the fact of life or death but the condition under which this is experienced. The revulsion cultivated by Magiscatzin's deathbed speaks to the sovereign's power over horror, the spectacle of suffering not merely the reminder of the power over life but also the terror of a state of torture exceeding the binary of life and death, a "creaturely" state.

Spanish forces, the narrator turns against the Native population, declaring that Liberty herself "vuelve la espalda al país que no sabe vengar sus insultos, y abandona la generación presente y las futuras a la orfandad y la escalvitud" (120) [turns her back on the country that doesn't know to avenge its insults, and abandons the present and future generations to orphanhood and slavery]. The consequences of conquest are thus laid at the feet of the Indian, blame for the 300 years of suffering protested by the creole patriot here lies with the Native himself.

These consequences are increasingly a mortal concern in the novel, as the contamination of envoys and ambassadors leads to the unspeakable violence and horror of Cholula, now no more than "un desierto sembrado de cadáveres" (76) [a desert sown with cadavers], to the imposition of Spanish necropolitical rule. After gaining control of the indigenous population, Cortés "se imponía la pena de muerte por los delitos más leves" (126) [imposed the death penalty for the most mild of crimes], basing his authority on his ability to "give death" to his subjects. Against this overt exercise of sovereignty as necropoiltics, Jicoténcal and Teutila resist by reclaiming the very commodities upon which the Spanish power relies: their bodies and death itself. Against the exception claimed by the Spanish to control and distribute death, these indigenous figures lay claim to this power by committing suicide. Jicoténcal's death may have been at the hands of his Spanish enemy, but he conceives of it as a form of martyrdom**:**

> La horrorosa muerte que me espera, los tormentos que sufro, van a despertar tu antiguo valor; y sin duda vosotros, ¡oh valientes tlascaltecas!, vengaréis la América, castigando a los monstruos que me martirizan. ¡Feliz yo mil veces si mi sacrificio os vuelve a vuestro antiguo heroísmo! ¿De qué modo pudiera mi vida

seros más útil que arrancándoos de vuestro envilecimiento y de vuestro letárgico desvarío? (131)

The horrific death that awaits me, the torments that I suffer, are going to wake your ancient valor; and without a death you, oh valiant Tlascaltecans!, will avenge America, punishing those monsters that make a martyr of me. I would be happy a thousand times over if my sacrifice restores to you your ancient heroism. In what way could my life be more useful to you than pulling you from your madness and debased lethargy?

Jicoténcal imagines himself as a sacrifice, made for his country, through which the people will be reborn as a sovereign nation. His is a gift of death, a transformative act through which the radical negativity of death itself is freed from Spanish control and becomes a site of iterability for bodies that had been reduced to commodities or sites of exchange. The imagined triumph of his death, though, depends on the affectability of its instance/instant, upon the witness who is marked by the event, and this necessary spectacle is denied by the structure of the text itself. If the trope of contamination raises anxieties about the strength of borders, the page of the romance here functions as a barrier against exposure or impressment by containing the event of Jicoténcal's death. The potentially moving even it given very little space in the novel, his interrogation and torture taking up only a few paragraphs and divorced from the central action of the chapter, placed in the context of multiple deaths and away from direct witnesses. In addition to this dampening of the event for the reader, Jicoténcal's death is also removed from the indigenous spectators to whom he wishes the return of that "antiguo heroísmo." Instead of Tlascala, the general dies in Texcoco, a foreign land, wearing a gag that "previene el efecto que

pudiera hacer su valiente y varonil elocuencia" [prevents the effect that his courageous and manly eloquence could have], and drugged with opium by his captors (131). His gift, thus usurped by his captors, does not waken the Amerindians to action. Instead, the "quietud estúpida" in which the public witness his death "demuestra su envilecimiento y que evidencia que dobló para siempre la cerviz al yugo que le tiene preparado la tiranía" (132) [demonstrates its degeneration and evinces that it has bent its neck forever to the yoke that tyranny has prepared for it]. The Amerindian thus refuses Jicoténcal's gift and so is exiled from its attendant promise of freedom. Even those who would mourn him are barred by this erasure. Teutila, who seeks redress for the death of her husband, cannot find a place to memorialize him. Finding her way to Texcoco for her own act of destruction, Teutila realizes that she may be treading over the very location of her husband's death. "Tal vez estoy pisando – exlclama llena de horror – la sangre de mi Jicoténcal! – y diciendo así hace esfuerzos por arrojarse a besar la tierra" (138) [Perhaps I am treading over – she exclaimed in horror – the blood of my Jicoténcal! – and saying this made the effort to kneel and kiss the ground]. Jicoténcal's death bears no marker, no memorial and so his lover can only commemorate a vague possibility, an act of devotion that is attached to *no* place.

Teutila also decides to use her own death as resistance but her martyrdom not only seeks to pronounce her power over her own life by committing suicide but also the sovereign power over the lives of others by turning her death into Death, negativity itself. This logic of sovereignty, described by Mbembe as that of the suicide bomber, is the assertion of power through a doubled destruction in which "my death goes hand in hand with the death of the Other. Homicide and suicide are accomplished in the same act…[making] resistance and self-destruction…synonymous" (36). Jicoténcal's widow plans to avenge her husband by poisoning

herself and killing Cortés in the process but, like her husband, her plans are frustrated and the limitations of her powers of self-determination are evinced by the failure of her deadly plan. Cortés is delayed, and by the time he appears the poison has taken hold of Teutila's body, leaving her paralyzed, unable to go forward with the murder. He does arrive in time to watch the indigenous woman, once the object of his sexual desire, suffer the effects of the poison and, tortured by pain and remorse, die. But the transformative possibility of the spectacle of her demise fails. As Cortés, moved by the event, begins to reconsider his actions, Fray Olmedo's reminds him that he has, by the grace of God, survived this encounter with death. In the failure of the martyr comes the resurgence of the survivor's sovereignty and so and Teutila's suicide does not become a release from bondage (Mbembe 39) but rather a confirmation of bondage itself as Cortés, declaring that "esta dolorosa escena es ya demasiado larga" [this painful scene has gone on too long], ends the scene and the novel with the insistence that "Mañana salimos para Méjico" (144) [Tomorrow we leave for Mexico]. Teutila not only fails to kill Cortés, but by affirming his survival with her death, leads him to greater conquests.

Her failure to create a new inheritance for her people is foreshadowed when, in the moments before her death, Teutila takes shelter with another widow, a mirror of Teutila herself except that this woman is surrounded by her children. Here, Teutila's chastity is emphasized as sterility, her inability to bestow an inheritance of her own made clear through the knowledge that she will die and leave nothing, no one, behind, and so is completely divorced from the contemporary indigenous community. In Olmedo's text, the Inca stands between not only the creole and the Spanish but the creole and the *indio* as well. In Varela's romance, the indigenous republicans separate out the *extranjero* from the *americano*, but the deaths of the noble

republicanos of Jicoténcal, elder and younger, and Teutila, separates them from the degenerated masses. With no children, their line dies with Teutila and she, as the last remaining of the resistant trio, the only central character who is entirely fictional, having no "existencia (histórica) previa a la ficción" (Ianes 95) [existence (historically) previous to the fiction], leaves no trace for posterity. No trace, that is, except for the textual artifact of the historical romance itself. Those left to consume their deaths and mourn for them in their turn are the creoles, absent from the romance entirely and so free from responsibility for the destruction of conquest. These readers, through mourning the natives, become the affective descendants of the Native heroes, replacing the contemporary Indian population from which the two are filially divorced through their sterility and affiliatively through the culpability for conquest that burdens the latter. In the text, the heroic couple lives and dies again and again with each reading (or, as in the case with Varela's imitators in Puebla, with each performance). Through the consumption of the text, its readers engage in a collective feeling, participating corporeally in the simultaneity that Benedict Anderson argues provides imaginative scope for the nation. While Anderson details the cognitive work of locating the nation in time and space, here we see how this argument can be expanded to include the somatic work of the sentimental, of *feeling* the nation. The reader bears witness to these events and so Jicoténcal's wish that his death may move the patriotism of a population retains the possibility of success in the sentimental extension of the romance's reader. His audience at Texcoco responded "stupidly" to the mute, drowsy death, but to the reader of the romance such cruel mechanisms, "bajos and viles" (131) [base and vile], heighten the sentimental effect of the scene. It is thus the nineteenth-century reader who, through mourning,

lays claim to his heritage of "antiguo valor," grafting herself onto his prophecy so that her reading of it, in the end, is self-revelatory.

Following the anxiety regarding exposure and identification in the novel, the reader is guarded from the contaminative possibilities of such affective connections by the barriers offered by the novel itself**.** By cathechting *historical* figures, the novel assures its reader with the distance of the past, engaging her with a shared desire for an irremediable loss. Like Follen's Sachem, the remnant of this heroic Indian is vacancy itself; both Jicoténcal's and Teutila's only lasting memorial is the book and, in Varela's romance, even this conduit to an-Other land is mediated by other texts. Much of the Indian's direct speech is recorded as lengthy citations of popular history itself, specifically Antonio de Solís's seventeenth-century chronicle *Historia de la conquista de Méjico*, an extremely popular text that had by 1826 gone through 40 editions (McPheeters 405 n.5). Varela cites extensive speeches from Solís's *Historia*, creating a palimpsest out of his novel that locates his romance within the realm of a verifiable, referential discourse, in much the same way that recourse to footnotes and found manuscripts support the historical work done by his generic peers. But the layers here also make the work self-referential, a network of texts from which the reader cannot escape. Solís's history is itself largely based on Bernal Diaz's account of conquest and so the historical subject is actually mediated by several levels of white, European authorship. By incorporating Solís's work seamlessly into his novel, Varela effectively re-places the need for a blank page by writing his romance onto the text of history itself. This is a historical romance of historiography itself. The effect of this layering is to call attention to the textuality of the romance and so to its subjects, the Indian empires, as historical themselves. In a rare direct address to Jicoténcal himself, the narrator cries out

"¡Generoso Jicoténcal! Tu noble franqueza va a perderte" (117) [your noble honesty will be your downfall], a cry that betrays the narrator's historical perspective and a cry that the young general cannot hear because it comes three centuries too late. These Amerindians, like Huayna-Capac are exiled from the present action, their chronological displacement an assurance that the space now occupied by the creole is indeed vacant, and so eliding the recognition or citizenry of any contemporary Indian community.[19]

This barrier to identification and responsibility is supported by a final supplanting of native authorship by a much greater text. As Bolívar's response to Olmedo's Inca indicates, ceding the power of the prophet to the indigenous past could be dangerous for the creole, whose inheritance is still traceable to the Spanish and whose post-independence social and economic structures still relied on the unequal distribution of resources and, in some areas, the continuance of Native tribute. The power of Native prophecy over independence threatens to make the creole responsible to the Indian, who, through his death, offers to legitimate the rejection of Spanish rule 300 years later. Jicoténcal's prophecy, as a call from the dead, serves an unnerving reminder that "we are not self-authored, that we follow in the footsteps of the dead" (Harrison ix); the native as prophet of my present/presence threatens to overwrite my *I* with the *he, he, he* of

[19] And so we can see creole patriotism as a comparable tool for erasure with the Vanishing American trope of their North American counterparts. Looking at Varela's novel in the context of his native Cuba, we can see how his geographical and chronological displacement of the indigenous community (they are Mexican and they are historical figures only) could contribute to the continuance, up until the middle of the twentieth century, of the belief that the indigenous population of the island was already extinct, or that their complete extinction was a historical fact. Such assertions continue even today despite ethnographical surveys that offer sufficient proof to the contrary. See Yaremko, especially 499-450. Similar to the North American discourse, this trope allows the South American to displace Amerindian communities into the past. It also lays ideological ground the aggressive land grab campaigns of the mid-late nineteenth century such as Argentina's Conquest of the Desert (Shumway 144).

Bolívar's complaint. The threat of the colossus is attenuated in Varela's novel by the intervention of a much greater Other, the presence of another book that takes from the Indian the possibility of authorship and instead inscribes him into "el libro fatal del destino" (Varela 3). Varela's romance opens with a debate about signs in the sky, their meaning and their influence, as prophecy, over action taken on earth. While the reader's alliance with Jicoténcal may lead her to reject Magiscatzin's passive response to this celestial text in favor of the young general's active resistance, both of these readings follow the introduction of and are limited by the contents of the Other book. The first sentence of the novel reads: "Estaba escrita en el libro fatal del destino la caída del grande imperio de Motezuma, bajo cuyas ruinas debían sepultarse la república de Tlascala" (3) [It was written in the fatal book of destiny the fall of the great empire of Motezuma, underneath whose ruins lies buried the Republic of Tlascala]. This romance, Varela warns, is a book about the Book, a realm of action that has already been dictated. The hermeneutical debate in the *senado* is thus restricted by the interpretive possibilities of the text in which it takes place. As the plot moves forward, the active, resistant heroes make frequent reference to this book that is as fatal in its inevitable terms as it is in its deathly effect on indigenous life. Jicoténcal ruminates on the "cadena de sucesos que la fatalidad había dispuesto contra su república" (117) [chain of events that fate has disposed against his republic], Teutila laments the "poder fatal e irresistible de los hados" [the fatal and irresistible power of the fates] that prevent her from succeeding in killing Cortés (140) and the narrator consigns himself to be merely the chronicler of this destiny already written upon the bodies of the Indian, the "destino fatal que había decidido la pérdida de América" (125). Beyond the historians that have chronicled its fall, the collapse of the American indigenous states has already been authored, has

already been written in (sacred) History itself. As Jicoténcal and the narrator indicate, the outcome of the Tlascalan struggle has already been decided – *ya había decidido* – circumscribing their actions within the limits of this "libro fatal," constraining any inheritance they would bequeath to that which the text allows them. The creole's responsibility to the death of the Indian, the death that makes their existence possible in both its failure to eradicate the Spanish and its prophecy of an independent state, is thus displaced as a responsibility to a greater Other, one that, for the priest Varela, continues to order everyday life. Even Olmedo's Inca is constrained by this text, in which he also functions as a character. The vengeance he calls for on behalf of the "pueblo americano" is not his to invoke, it is already "en el gran libro del destino escrito" (127) [in the great book of destiny written]. The Inca thus moves from prophet to character, or, in his moment of revelation, a reader. Prefacing his vision of the future independent America, Huayna-Capac says "la página fatal ante mis ojos desenvolvió el destino" (137) [the fatal page before my eyes unwrapped the destiny]. Creole independence in the poem is thus already written, an event that will occur despite the intervention of the Indian past. In Varela's romance, Magiscatzin's exposition of the signs in the sky is a direct citation of Solís, a history of the future that becomes revelation when spoken in the past. This prophecy declares that the Spanish "ha de venir" (6), an indication not only of a future event (one that will come) but a structure that *requires* it (it has – *ha* – to come). All of this, including the sacrificial deaths of the Amerindians, was written before and by another, not by the Indian who, even in death, remains exiled from the documentary assurances of subjectivity in the new states.

## Chapter Three
## The Shadow of the (m)Other: A story of forefathers

"Born all of the same mother, our fathers [are] of different origins and blood."
-Bolívar,

"You have every reason to exult in your descent, for, surely, if any man may claim to be a citizen and a proprietor in the Union, it is one, that, like yourself, can point to a line of ancestors, whose origins is lost in the obscurity of time. You are truly an American."
-Rev. J.R. C., preface to Cooper's *Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*

*De te fabula narratur!*
-Marx

### I. On the frontier, a gravestone

When James Fenimore Cooper's most famous literary creation, Natty Bumppo, finally lays himself down to die on the American frontier, he asks the survivors to remember his only remaining companion, his dog. The hound was already old when readers were introduced to him in *The Pioneers* (1823), Cooper's first Leatherstocking novel, and with the death of Indian John the dog had become Natty's only company as he traveled across the prairie to meet his end. The animal had slowed and withered like the man himself, and in his last moments Natty reaches out to the dog for comfort. "You have been an honest, and a bold and a faithful hound," he tells Hector, and asks the Pawnees to refrain from their cultural practice of slaying the dog upon his grave if only "for the love you bear his Master" (382). The memorializing sentiment of mourning, Natty proposes, will function as a site of responsibility, redirecting affection due to the man onto the beloved objects that remain. The dog, though, was already dead.

Receiving no response to his call, Natty reaches out for the animal, "the old man felt for the mouth and endeavored to force his hand between the cold lips" (383). The violent investigation discovers only "a severe and unexpected shock," a "pious fraud" perpetuated by his Indian friends, his companion skinned and lifeless at his feet. The old man is stunned; confronted with this death, on the verge of his own, the hardened trapper is silent, muttering "The dog is dead!" only after "a pause of many minutes" (383). It is from this shock that Natty turns to Captain Middleton to discuss his own death. "I am glad you have come," he tells the Captain, "for, though kind, and well meaning according to the gifts of their colour, these Indians are not the sort of men to lay the head of a white man in his grave." He asks that Middleton bury Hector as well, first asking that they be near each other, then asking that the dog be at his feet, and finally, "for that matter put him, side by side. A hunter need never be ashamed to be found in company with his dog" (383). The prospect of his own death, and the horror of his dog's carcass reaffirm for Natty a racial identification that is at the same time sentimental. The Indians, it seems, are restricted to only "the gifts of their colour," and a white death is beyond their reach.

The dog and Natty signify a relationship that Donna Haraway classifies in *The Companion Species Manifesto* as "significant otherness" (3), an affection that does not seek to devour or destroy in the aggressive action of identification. The dog, Natty reminds the reader throughout his adventures, is not a man, but his affection for the animal draws it close, extending the sentimentality of the scene to the lifeless hound, a marked departure from the pragmatic consumption and slaughter of animals by the protagonist who, when he is resurrected for a subsequent novel in the series, will be called Deerslayer. This affection is, importantly not the same as the totemic identification witnessed among the native communities in *Last of the*

*Mohicans* either; the dog is not representative of Natty the way the turtle was for Chingachgook or the beaver for an unnamed Huron devotee in *Last of the Mohicans* (346-347). Instead, the hunter and his hound, as much in their deaths as in their shared lives, "make each other up, in the flesh" (Haraway 3), the pair speak to a kinship claim (9), a "co-constitutive" (12) relationship whose foundation is an inassimilable love.

But even as this relationship of significant otherness obscures the affective boundaries between man and animal, the neglect of this sentimental bond significantly *others* the native community. Natty has long been understood by literary critics as a liminal figure, living outside of traditional white communities and embracing native practices in a way that optimistically questions the racist assumptions of what would later be called Manifest Destiny. On the frontier, where accepted boundaries are renegotiated, Natty seems to represent the possibility of companion-ality between white and native communities, a respect and understanding that does not become destruction and consumption. Natty takes on native names and dress, defends indigenous cultural practices and offers critiques of white individuals, communities, even legal authority. His habits, Cooper writes, "were so nearly assimilated to those of the savages, the conjunction of their interests excited no surprise" (*Pioneers* 85). But the event of death and the cultural work of mourning fortifies racial and cultural identifications, making clear the filial heritage that ultimately defines, and differentiates, native and white communities.

This definitional work of death can be seen clearly in comparing the death scenes of the central native and white protagonists in the series, Chingachgook (or Indian John) and Natty himself. A full five chapters before the reader is introduced to the person of John Mohegan, she is admonished several times to remember him. Sending off his injured young friend in the first

chapter of *The Pioneers*, Leather-stocking advises him to look for Indian John, a man only invoked previously as witness to memory ("In the old war… I travelled…with a rifle bullet in my thigh, and then cut it out with my own jack-knife. Old Indian John knows the time well" 26). Now sending off his friend, he calls for Indian John and his ancient knowledge again, this time of herbal remedies to aid the modern doctor. "Remember old Indian John," he reminds the young hunter (27), and, again, "remember Indian John" before the boy departs. John, a Christian Indian living among the settlers at Templeton, is the baptismal name for Chingachgook, a Delaware chief and Natty's only human companion to appear in more than one of the novels. His invocation in the opening of the series makes of the man a figure of and in memory, a representation cemented when the reader is finally given his story and an explanation of his name. He is the last of his line, determined to die in the land of his ancestors. "He stood alone," the narrator says, "The last of his family, and his particular tribe, the few Delawares, who yet continued about the head-waters of the river, gave him the mournful appellation of Mohegan" (85). The name Mohegan "recalled the idea of his nation in ruins" and so the title, together with his conversion, becomes a sign not only of loss but also erasure. "The settlers had united," the narrator continues, "according to the Christian custom, his baptismal with his national name, and to them, he was generally known as John Mohegan, or, more familiarly, as Indian John" (85). Chingachgook, the reader discovers, is a character who is already lost to us.

The violence of erasure that may be implied in renaming the Indian chief is ameliorated by the native's own grave perspective; he understands himself to be a remnant who lingers only "with a determination of laying his bones in that country, where his fathers had so long lived and governed" (85). When the time comes at the conclusion of the novel to accomplish this task,

amid a forest fire and a rescue adventure definitive of the genre, Indian John merely sits down and waits to be taken. Chingachgook does not fall in a grand battle, like those described in the other novels, or even amid the minor violence of *The Pioneers* itself, as shown in Temple's siege on Natty's home. Instead it is nature, aggravated by the clumsiness a miner but more importantly by the dry heat in the region, that provides John with the opportunity to die. It is the land itself, not man, whose passive violence, violence without object or agency, threatens the Native. Natty urges his friend to preserve himself and flee the fire, but Chingachgook replies:

> Why should Mohegan go?...He has seen the days of an eagle, and his eye grows dim. He looks on the valley; he looks on the water; he looks in the hunting – grounds – but he sees no Delawares. Every one has a white skin. My fathers say, from the far-off land, come. My women, my young warriors, my tribe, say, come. The Great Spirit says, come. Let Mohegan die. (416)

The Delaware chief sees his death as an answer to a call, a request made not by the displacing white population but from his own ancestors, his own community from which the act of living has isolated him. First his fathers, then the women and youth, and finally God herald Chingachgook from "the far-off land," a call that he answers with a passive resistance to life. He doesn't kill himself, he simply refuses to save himself. If romance, and historical romance in particular, can be defined as a version of questing fiction, then refusing to "shake off your apathy" (405), not sacrificing yourself but merely refusing to rescue or work towards salvation, is a fundamental transgression of the way the world works. This resignation is implied even in the very act of self-naming. In this response the reader witnesses Chingachgook embrace "the mournful appellation of Mohegan" that he had previously refused to acknowledge "excepting on

the most solemn occasions" (85). The name is a tribute to the destruction of his larger community, and labels John as a man, not only out of place but also out of time. The nation it names is already gone. Waiting to die on the burning hill, the Indian's eyes fix on "distant hills" but also on "the womb of futurity" (410). The imagined future place, gestational and therefore maternal in its description, is also a return to the former glory and kinship of his tribe, and John understands his death, "the happiest moment of his life" to be the only way to fulfill this revelation (410). It is at this moment that Chingachgook throws off the mantle of his Christian name and the English language as well. "It's hard to keep them from going back to their native ways," Natty tells the distraught clergyman (421), reminding the onlookers that "Flesh isn't iron, that a man can live for ever, and see his kith and kin driven to a far country, and he left to mourn, with none to keep him company" (419). Neglecting to consider the crowd of white spectators or even his own friendship suitable for the definition of "company," Natty sees the event of John's death as isolated, untouchable, because it is a return of a man to his community before or outside the boundaries of white, Christian culture. In death, Chingachgook finds the world he once knew, a world that had long since abandoned him. In death, Mohegan says, "the eyes of Mohegan grow young. I look – but I see no white-skins; there are none to be seen but just and brave Indians. Farewell, Hawk-eye – you shall go…to the white man's heaven; but I go after my fathers" (421).

Mohegan's death even excludes his closest companion, Natty himself. Unlike Natty's hound, whose difference Natty concedes yet whose death, while individual, can be shared, a co-constituency seems impossible for the native and white man. In his final directions to Captain Middleton, Natty insists that he and his dog be buried together, but Indian John's grave and memorial marker emphasize the insurmountable gap between native and white communities.

Investigating the monuments that mark the graves of his friends Chingachgook and Major Effingham, Natty has his young companions read the inscriptions only to find himself included in the epitaph. On Major Effingham's stone, "a rich monument, decorated with an urn, and ornamented with the chisel," the inscription, consecrated to the memory of the once rich and mighty landowner, details the man's titles, bravery, religion and personal history. The memorial concludes by remarking on Natty, saying of him that the old man's cares "were alleviated only by the tender care of his old, faithful, and upright friend and attendant, Nathaniel Bumppo. His descendants rear this stone to the virtues of the master, and to the enduring gratitude of the servant" (451). Leather-stocking, joyful at his inclusion on the monument, has his friends point out his name among the letters and, feeling the shape of the letters on the stone, remarks that "'Tis a gin'rous gift to a man who leaves none of his name and family behind him in a country, where he has tarried so long" (452). His friends, inscribing Natty's name on the headstone, have given the itinerant frontiersman a permanent space through which he can be remembered and thus, despite his lack of actual heirs, a way to bequest a heritage, to continue on in the country. Even after he has passed (or even after he is past) there is a material connection that remains. In memorializing Natty on Effingham's stone, the marker offers Natty a material connection to a community that is emphatically white, not Native. Although Effingham hardly appears in the novel, and Natty's personal reminiscences usually carry an invocation of Chingachgook as witness or friend, Leather-stocking is permanently inscribed as a white man's companion, a relationship witnessed by those that will continue to read or consume the text, a love that is transferred from master to servant much the same way Natty would have the Pawnees think of his dog.

On the smaller, plainer stone next to this marker, Natty's friendship is neglected in memorializing the Indian. Unlike Effingham's stone, the Indian's bears no mention of friends or family; instead the stone insists that he was all that remained, saying, "He was the last of his people." Chingachgook's marker also has a title (he was "an Indian Chief, of the Delaware Tribe"), and while the inscription may aim to reduce the signs of difference, a comparison between the simple marker and the grand stone next to it undermines this project and instead emphasizes the isolation of the man's death. "It may be said of him that his faults were those of an Indian, and his virtues those of a man," the stone reads (452). While the latter addition attempts to incorporate the native figure in a larger group, defined by the white Christian norm, the juxtaposition between Indian and man implied in the faults/virtues attribution imposes upon the native a humanism from which he is also already excluded. Not only is Natty's companionship disavowed, but the statement puts in doubt the possibility of any shared relationship between native and 'man.' The structural changes and orthographical errors also emphasize the difference and distance of the native in death. In opposition to Effingham's memorial, which contains his one name and several titles (both specific, like Esquire and Major, and general like Christian and master), the native's stone has one title (Chief) and several names. The deceased, the stone reads, "was known by the several names of John Mohegan; Mohican…and Chingagook," the last two of which Natty has to correct, the first on pronunciation and the latter on a much deeper error, one that is literally carved in stone. "'Gach, boy," Natty says, " –'gach-gook; Chingachgook" (452). The misspelling changes the meaning of the name, the only native and singular name (particular to the man) offered by the memorial. The order of names moves from Christian appellation to native and as it does its errors and

misunderstandings become more evident and more grievous. If Chingachgook was rendered inaccessible through a Christian renaming in life, in death he remains similarly removed from the process of mourning. "The name should be set down right," Natty tells his friends, "for an Indian's name has always some meaning in it" (452). In changing the spelling, the name becomes divorced from this meaning and, because it was bestowed on him as a descriptor of his own actions in the world, with its loss, Chingachgook's history is also lost to the broader memorial narrative. Chingachgook is a *mournful* subject, in that he is a representation of a general loss, but he is also removed from the realm of the mourn-able through both his self-effacement in death and the acts of erasure that mar his memorial. If Natty's affiliation is written in stone, Chingachgook fails to leave a legible mark.

Natty's own death and memorial marker reaffirms his affective relationship to a white community bound off from native influence. In *The Prairie*, his companionship with Chingachgook seems to live on, despite his friend's death, through the figure of Hard-Heart, a Pawnee warrior whom Bumppo "adopts" and of whom he speaks in a paternal manner. But as the trapper prepares to die, the event of death and the communal act of mourning convince Natty of the impossibility of such relationships. Even before he discovers the "pious fraud" lying at his feet, Natty rejects the offerings of a native funeral and tribute. When his "son" offers him traditional heralds and ceremonies, Natty answers, "Pawnee, I die, as I have lived, a Christian man…[God] knows my colour" (381). Death here, as with Chingachgook's in *The Pioneers*, is a moment of cultural affiliation, an act (continued through the repetition and return of mourning) that is culturally, and, here, racially distinct. When Natty tells Middleton that a white man's death is simply not "among the gifts of their colour," he is practicing death as a form of

identification and consequently one that disavows his previous native practices and affiliations. He dies as he has lived, and he dies a white, Christian man. Because of the shared, communal work of mourning, Natty's end is riddled with familial anxieties, a concern that he too dies alone, "an end of my race" (383), a lament that recalls Chingachgook. But taking up the mantle of kinship is Captain Middleton, the grandson of a couple united by Natty's heroism in *Last of the Mohicans*. Middleton argues that he owes his life to Natty, not just because of the adventure the two had on the eponymous prairie but as a primordial debt as well. Without Natty's intervention, Middleton would not exist and so the Captain "inherits a heavy debt of gratitude from his ancestors" (384). This structure of indebtedness incorporates Middleton into the body of Natty's community. He offers to act as Natty's kin and make him a stone of his own, a favor that gives Leather-stocking much relief. He instructs the Captain: "Put no boastful words on the same; but just the name, the age, and the time of the death, with something from the holy book….My name will then not be altogether lost on 'arth; I need no more" (384). His enduring name saves Natty from the loss suffered by his friend and in consequence his grave becomes a marker to traveler and trader, a reminder of civilization ("a just white man"), a reminder of a common heritage on the threshold, in 1804, of the new frontier (386).

By comparing Natty's and Chingachgook's deaths, we see how death functions both as a mode of erasure, as detailed in Chapter Two's investigation of the twinned discourses of the Vanishing American and creole patriotism, as well as a *generative* structure for community, which will be the focus of the chapter at hand. Natty Bumppo, in his confirmed bachelorhood and sexual sterility may be a strange location for an argument about generation or reproduction, but through his death Natty takes on the procreative role of the lingering memorial. The erasure

worked upon the Native community effectively clears the land of prior claims, but a society cannot be founded on a vacancy, it cannot be established in a *no* place, and so death must work upon the dominant community as well in order for them to inhabit the land abandoned by their Native precursors. Death, this chapter argues, works to *give place* to community through the *hic jacet* or "here lies" memorial of the grave. Burial of the dead is an appropriation of land that, through the affective ties between the living and dead, grounds a community's claim to a specific location.

In Robert Pogue Harrison's discussion of *hic jacet* in his *Dominion of the Dead*, the author says "the surest way to take possession of a place and secure it as one's own is to bury one's dead in it" (24). Burying, he argues, is akin to building, "the domestication of space" effected by the establishment of a horizon or containment (19), a containment that is simultaneously the establishment of physical locatability, the "here" of "here lies," as well as a historical understanding implied in the temporal *hic* as the "now" of "here." This signifying force depends in its turn on the inscriptive act of memorialization that distinguishes this cultivated land from the chaos of unmarked space. "It does not suffice," Harrison says, "to place the dead in the ground…it is also necessary to mark that burial" (28). Interment allows for a space upon which to write and by inscribing space with "here" and "now," the memorial gives *place* to a social relation. This signification is the work of the *sema*:

> It is not for nothing that the Greek word for "sign," *sema*, is also the word for "grave." For the Greeks the grave marker was not just one sign among others. It was a sign that signified the source of signification itself, since it "stood for" what it "stood in" – the ground of burial as such. In its pointing to itself, or to its own

> mark in the ground, the *sema* effectively opens up the place of the "here," giving it that human foundation without which there would be no places in nature. (21)

The grave thus *marks* the land as a social space; Harrison's argument makes clear the relationship between writing and death that inheres to our assertions of identity, and therefore our understanding of community or relation in general. Death and burial cultivates a *textual* relationship between a subject, his home and fellow mourners. Natty's grave marker, a simple stone with his name, age, and scripture, speaks to, and thus serves as a foundation for, a community, while Chingachgook's error-filled marker signifies nothing, can speak to no one. Natty's foundational act on the frontier is death itself, a death that tames and claims the prairie, his grave the place where "it is in the earth itself that it is 'written' that we have our 'place here'" (Harrison 34). The signifying work of the memorial is therefore a "grounding" of space, a containment through which it can become possess-able and therefore a boundary between the *mine* and *yours* of identificatory objects. The tomb raiding of the burial mounds, the poetic vanishing of indigenous peoples in New England and the elegaic spiritualism of creole patriotism have all invented a blank page, an empty land upon which the planting of recognizable white bodies inscribes a new narrative. The empty land is possessed by the dead and, through our memorial rites we lay claim to these dead and the land in its turn.

Despite his sterility, then, Natty is a generative figure for the expanding American state, going forth onto the frontier in order to make a place for those who follow. Leather-stocking has and continues to be read by critics as a masculine rejection of domestic structures of control: he rejects marriage for himself and flees before the advances of civilization, finding refuge in the expansive, unmarked land of the frontier. Standing at the head of this field of criticism is Leslie

Fiedler who, in his *Love and Death in the American Novel* declares Cooper's hero to be "always opposed…to the 'stickier' and more sentimental kinds of relationships" (181). Cooper's hero, Fiedler declares, is a "protest against the gentle tyranny of home and woman" (194). But while Natty himself has no children, his adventures do circulate around the (re)establishment of order and the (re)uniting of white socially dominant couples whose reproductive capabilities are in turn assured by Natty's intervention. This makes *their* legacy, or rather their ability to create a legacy, *his* legacy. In his adventures, Natty guides and defends, rescues and restores troubled couples, finding for them the domestic happiness and reproductive capabilities that he seems to reject. This community-building work is fully articulated by his death and burial. Captain Middleton is evidence of a community of mourners that Natty has, despite his sterility, generated as his descendents, he their ancestor. The "debt of gratitude from his ancestors" writes over the fact that Middleton is "not of my kin" (*Prairie* 384) and so the Captain can assume the responsibility of familial tribute. Despite the famous and persistent criticism that places Natty in a rebellious flight from domesticity, the reproductive work of the dead frontiersman means that the *late* Natty can be understood as a *maternal* figure, giving birth to a community that expands with his travels, each adventure westward leaving sentimental remainders in the couples he rescued. Death and the presence of Middleton-as-mourner marks Natty as a sentimental medium, a shared love object that binds together a diverse community of which Middleton is metonymically representative. The continued reading of his *sema*, the sign that indicates "where a just white-man sleeps" (*Prairie* 386), places Natty as an object of desire and ritual consumption, a sentimental commodity for imperial American culture that echoes the work done by the suffering yet sacred mothers of the domestic romance. Through death the wayward hero is incorporated

back into the domestic structure of the nation; through his *sema* the hero reproduces that structure on the previously unmarked land of the frontier.

If Natty, or at least dead Natty, can be reincorporated into the national romance, then, because his life and death occur on and impact the cultural and racial borderlands of the nation, Natty can be placed in a clear relationship with those domestic novels that take as their subject these issues of contact and contest, the miscegenist romances that seem to imagine American history as a commingling of racial groups.[1] In particular, I would like to compare the cultural work accomplished by Cooper's hero with that done by the heroine (or, as I will argue heroines) in a novel that postured as a direct response to Cooper's conquering *Pioneers*, Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok*. By comparing Leatherstocking with the interracial sexual coupling of Child's novel, I do not mean to argue that Natty does not represent, in the words of Leslie Fiedler, a "dread of miscegenation" (208). Rather, I will argue that the supposed egalitarian or intermediate work that the interracial romance accomplishes is undone or *overwritten* by the work of death in the novel. By cathecting the dead, white mother(s), Child's novel reinforces racial barriers that its interracial marriage would transgress. I will conclude by comparing the work of these dead

[1] A note on terminology is due here for the dependence on the term "miscegenation," which for the purposes of this study references those romances whose central marriage plot involves an interracial couple whose production is an interracial child. *Mestizaje* and *mestiçagem*, the equivalent terms in Spanish and Portuguese did not carry the same negative weight that accompanies the term "miscegenation." Doris Sommer, in explaining the role of this interracial ideal in national formation declares that in Latin America they were "practically a slogan for national consolidation" (22) and laments that the terms are "so pejoratively rendered in English as miscegenation" (78). I use the term here as a reflection of those nationally-minded projects incorporated into its Spanish and Portuguese equivalents but I do not divorce the negative connotative development attached to the English, instead arguing throughout that such conciliatory expressions hold within them the violent exclusion implied in the negative term it has become in English.

"mothers" in U.S. national romances with a nineteenth-century Latin American historical romance that takes as its focus the Other mother, the indigenous mother, in order to understand how the rituals of redress represented by these maternal deaths might function differently according to the cultural location and definition they offer to the present community.

**II. In that grave, my mother**

In a country marked by "a steadily hardening definition of racial categories" (Richter 154), a young Lydia Maria Child published the novel *Hobomok* (1824), a tale of a Puritan settler who marries and has a child with an Indian chief. The author, who would later rise to prominence as a social reformer and abolitionist, recounted the origins of her first novel by insisting that that book was her answer to the call, made by the *North American Review*, for a national literature that would exploit "the unequalled fitness of our early history for the purposes of a work of fiction" (*NAR* 480, (Karcher xvii-xviii). New England history, the magazine declared, was populated by "prominent and high-toned" men who abandoned "all that belongs to the recollections of infancy" and invented themselves anew upon the "outside of the world" (481, 480). These men, therefore, were the perfect foundation for establishing claims to national character and literature. This consciously historical literature, populated as it was with these epic men in their epic struggle, would demonstrate to European doubters that the United States had not achieved independence to the detriment of its cultural production.[2] Citing this as her

[2] Sydney Smith wrote in the *Edinburgh Review:*

> The Americans are a brave, industrious, and acute people; but they have hitherto given no indications of genius, and made no approaches to the heroic, either in their morality or character. They are but a recent offset indeed from England; and

inspiration, Child explicitly posits *Hobomok* as an attempt to define a national historical character, displacing the divorce from European heritage made explicit by the Revolution onto a colonial precedent. It was to these ends that Child, upon reading the article, "siezed [sic] a pen, and before the bell rang for the afternoon meeting I had written the first chapter, exactly as it now stands" (Karcher xviii).

*Hobomok* therefore participates in the project to resurrect the historical body in order to define the present citizen and so it also, as indicated in the novel's preface, is in dialogue with the incredibly popular romances of Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper that were trying to do the same. The narrator sees the works of these authors "galloping over hill and dale, fast and more successful than Alexander's conquering sword" (3); they are an imperial force conquering both the literary market and its readers, whose "mind is every where supplied" with *Pioneers*, *The Spy* lurking in their closets and *The Pilot* in the deep (3). The popular genre is here imagined as an all-consuming one, one that invades the reader's physical space including her very body, and so the demands of the reader upon the book market are matched by the demands made by the book itself upon the reader. The narrator does not conjure the image of the historical romance as consuming martial force in order to protest its work of occupation upon the

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> they should make it their chief boast, for many generations to come, that they are sprung from the same race with Bacon and Shakespeare and Newton…During the thirty or forty years of their independence, they have done absolutely nothing for the Sciences, for the Arts, for Literature…In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? (79)

Of note is his insistence that the "cultural wasteland" he declares for the United States (French 37) means that they should cling to their British patrimony. Cultural independence is thus set up as a filial reimagining. His comments sparked several conversations about the need for this independent national culture in the United States and the *Yamoyden* review referenced here formed a part of that discussion.

American land ("Even American ground is occupied" 3), but rather to make space for New England in its conquering discourse, to "rouse the dormant energies" by resurrecting New England's past (4). Child's narrator here relies on the affective power of these sentimental histories to effect a change in their reader, not just in expanding her knowledge about the past, but more importantly making her *feel differently* in and about the present.

While this affective power of the romance was shared with other fictional texts, the historical romance maintained a moral superiority over its fanciful counterparts. Because of their seductive or romantic themes, novels were vilified as dangerous contaminative influences, particularly for their female readership who, isolated from public education in both official and unofficial forms, relied on reading to provide them with information about the world (Baym 11-28). Even early American novels themselves picked up on this anxiety; works such as Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* (1797) and Tabitha Tenney's *Female Quixotism* (1801) warned against the exposure to romance by pairing the act of reading novels with the perils of seduction. Reading novels, these texts implied, led to irrational and immoral behavior because, exposed thus to fictions, the reader no longer understood reality as it presented itself outside the written page. Nina Baym asserts that these protests were founded on the belief that reading novels encouraged a type of social passivity; "Saturating women's interior worlds with fantasy," Baym says, "Novels ruptured their connections with, loyalty to, interest in, and usefulness for, the everyday republican world" (17). Seven years after publishing her first historical romance, Child herself articulates this fear of novels in her domestic manual *The Mother's Book*. In it, the author decries the pernicious influence of novels, joining her voice to the common discourse that posited them as false prophets, frivolous and even dangerous means of distraction. Instead of

novels, Child promoted 'serious' literature, encouraging mothers to foster a love for "History, Voyages, Travels [and] Biography" in their children in order "to prevent an exclusive and injurious taste for fiction (cited in Baym 17). If novels were dangerous because they threatened to break down a sense of continuity with and responsibility to one's community, history, as a referential discourse, was to be praised because it grounded its reader in the realities of her world. History, Baym argues, was promoted "in rhetorical contrast to the evils of novel reading" (14). If the Radcliffean romance could be charged with isolating its reader, carrying her away from "the everyday republican world," then the study of history grounded the subject in her own reality, allowing her a connection to the polity and a sense of participation in the community. The advent of the historical novel then changed the terms of the literary debate and allowed fiction to escape its negative stigma. "Hostility to the novel per se," Baym argues, "Began to evaporate only with the success of Walter Scott's historical novel *Waverly* in 1814. This suggests that the novel, demonized as history's other, escaped its pariah status by becoming historical itself" (23).

To illustrate this redemption Baym cites Child's assertion that the novels based on Scott's model could be read "in connexion with history to great advantage." Their influence Child says, "is never in opposition to good; and to the thinking mind they afford abundant food for reflection" (Baym 23). This favorable effect derives from the cultural work of the historical study; instead of disabling its audience with escapist fantasies, the historical novel encourages active participation in "the patriotic work of establishing and affirming national origins, characters, and values" (Baym 155). The (re)presentation of the past not only illustrates a foundational community, but also serves as a positive act of construction in that it ties the present

to that past, linking the contemporary national subject to a proto-national community. The historical romance has a distinct advantage over other forms of history in effecting this cultural work. As Ernest Renan states, "A community of interest is assuredly a powerful bond between men...but nationality has a sentimental side to it" (51). By its appropriation of the sentimental tropes of the domestic novel (love, marriage, suffering, death, and dying) the historical romance produces an intimate, affective foundation for community and in so doing makes a corporeal appeal to the reader. The sentimental nature of the historical romance forces its reader literally to *feel for* the protagonists in their loves, losses, and redemptions. The reader's sighs and tears are corporeal signs of a textual possession, both of the text by the reader, but also of the reader by the text. The text incorporates the reader through their corporeal excitation and so she becomes physically involved with the community at/in hand. This is her "abundant food for reflection," as Child states, a distinctly national and nationalist consideration that rests on the author's ability to produce and reproduce community.

It is notable that this cultural work is couched in the language of the table. Novels were considered light and airy "confectionary" (quoted in Mailloux 134) for the reader, satisfying a selfish indulgence, a luxurious desire that exceeds material necessity. They were, as one concerned female reader complained, not "solid works" (quoted in Mailloux 134); they neglected to give the subject anything to take in, any substance with which to commune or create community. The profane "infectious fantasy," the "exclusive and injurious taste for fiction," separates the reader from the sacred practices of the citizen, their productive (or rather reproductive) burden of the "everyday republican world." These are self-contained, onanistic fantasies that isolate the reader from her social responsibility. The America "occupied" by the

"solid works" of Scott and Cooper is one in which, as Steven Mailloux has argued, reading itself formed "part of the specific disciplinary targeting of the body" (136). These romances grounded the subject in the material world. By embracing the historiographical posture, a referential discourse, these novels exorcised fantasy, becoming themselves substantial and the reader well-fed. The reader of these novels, their defenders argued, did not feed on the imaginary figures of romance, but on their own dead, the material of their own cultural past. As an iteration of history, therefore, the historical romance is not only a necrophilic but also a necrophagic discourse. Reading as a consumptive act (as both eating up the reader, bringing her into a structural system, and a using up of the written resource as a productive cultural chain) ties the subject to the mode of production, her body to the body of the text and to the bodies in the text. The deviant seduction of the novel is displaced by the chivalric mode of Scott's romances and further removed by the austere sexual attitudes of the chaste hero and the hesitating, aristocratic lovers in Cooper's novels, making solid promises about what was and is and not airy threats about what could be.

Child's recourse to the interracial sexual coupling in her novel was, accordingly, the focus of the strongest criticism, even from her source of inspiration. Child's critics in the *North American Review* focused their attention almost entirely on the issue of miscegenation. In an 1824 brief note about the book, the reviewer declared her depiction of a "high born and delicate female" wedding an Indian "not only unnatural, but revolting" (*NAR* 263). A subsequent extended review ruled that "there can be…but one opinion respecting this story; it is in very bad taste, to say the least, and leaves upon the mind a disagreeable impression" (*NAR* 1825 87). But despite the clamor regarding sexual coupling, the interracial marriage is displaced in the novel by

other, mortal concerns. While the mixed-race union produces a new *n*ative subject that could speaks to hybrid possibilities for the national character, the community that is actually (re)born in and through the novel is a familiar, and, to these reviewers, a better tasting one. Both reviews make brief positive remarks regarding her depiction of the Puritan family and the later review calls out one scene in particular that it found worthy, despite the novel's "bad taste," of eager consumption; "The death bed scenes of the Ladies, Mary Conant and Arabella Johnson," the reviewer informs us, just before the magazine's reproduction of that very scene, "are described with feeling and pathos, and varied with considerable skill" (87). The interracial eroticism is overwritten by a new gestational location for New World identity: the American is born from the grave of the sacred mother. By looking at how Child deploys death and mourning in her text, we can see how, despite the notoriety of its interracial romance, the novel's central concern remains community – and racial – fidelity. This foundational narrative produces a sentimental attachment to the white colonial community within the novel, and this work is mirrored in the act of writing the history itself.

This community is the effect of both a sentimental and historiographical relationship with the dead body, a key trope in sentimental literature, an act (dying) that Jane Tompkins defines as "the supreme form of heroism" (127). Describing perhaps the most famous death scene in nineteenth-century literature, that belonging to Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Tompkins declares that death "brings an access to power, not a loss of it" (127). She argues, following Stowe, that death and the dead minister to the living and so hold redemptive or salvific power over them. Through confronting death and mourning the dead, the lost are brought back into the fold of their sacred communities. Along with the departed child, Tompkins argues that it is

mothers who are "uniquely capable" of laying claim to the spiritual power of this deathly work (128).

But while the child often represents innocence, or the innocent victim, why does the mother retain a privileged place in this grave discourse? While Tompkins and other critics argue that this is because of the mother's important role in the moral or sentimental education of the child, particularly for the child-as-future-citizen under the aegis of "republican motherhood," I would trace the mother's formative role to a much earlier intervention. As the site of original partition, of birth itself, the mother's body is linked inextricably with dissolution and death. As the site of physical and later egoic separation that makes space for identity and identification, the mother's body is indelibly marked by the loss by which living is made possible. At birth, the child becomes separated physically from the mother's body; the child's somatic continuity with the mother is at this moment literally severed. As the mother's body becomes psychically disentangled from the child's imaginary space, a lack opens up through which the child begins to consider its own limits and identity. The mother's body, then, presents itself as a somatic remainder and thus a reminder of the division and dissolution that occurs biological and psychically in order for the subject to begin to be, and even "to be," the definition of a subject position that conjugates an ontological position in language (i.e. "I am"). In the Americas, this knowledge of dissolution was historically pressing, as the newly-independent nations articulated their distinction from mother lands and mother tongues. But surely they could not afford to allot *that* mother the power of death in their separation. Instead, the new nations chose to imagine their family otherwise.

Freud described this reinvention of ones parents as "the family romance," an imaginative phantasy in which the subject rejects the authority of his parents by latching onto the idea that those he has always known as his parents are not his *real* parents. The presence of *other* parents signals to the child the possibility of his own parents' insufficiency, introducing with them the idea "that other parents are in some respects preferable" (298). Freud remarks that after the child becomes conscious of the role sex plays in procreation, the phantasy is emended to no longer question the role of the mother but to focus its narrative upon the father. The author of the phantasy imagines infidelity on the part of his mother, inventing a new, exalted paternity that articulates the understanding that *pater semper incertus est* [the father is always uncertain] (299-300). The mother, who by contrast is always *certissima*, "remains firmly and certainly planted in reality, excluded from the process of 'fictionalization'" (Hirsch 170). But while she is excluded from the fictional schema, the mother remains necessary for this narrative process as this fiction is *inscribed upon her body*; the mother becomes the blank page upon which the child projects this generative phantasy. Even more pertinent to the application of this structure to national discourse is the *narrative* power that Freud ascribes to this phantasy. The original title of his essay, Peter Gay points out, is "Der Familien*roman* der Neurotiker" (emphasis added), "roman" translating more specifically to "novel," a translation that complicates the idea of authorship and inscription implied by Freud's analysis. The "authority" under scrutiny in the phantasy is connected to the author-ity of the fictional text, the narrative alternatives invented by the child, what Freud himself calls "these works of fiction" (300). Freud also declares that his new position of author-ity is simultaneous with a growing nostalgia, "an expression of the child's longing for the happy, vanished days when his father seemed to him the noblest and strongest of men and his

mother was the dearest and loveliest of women" (300). The child's narrative invention, his claim to authorship is therefore a mournful act, one that attempts, over and over, to recover what has been lost to him. But while the father is restored in the phantasy, (Freud reassures anxious parents that "the child is not getting rid of the father but exalting him" 300), the child's narrative space is opened up by, and thus relies upon, the mother's defilement, her fall from an original grace or preoedipal wholeness. The mother's loss must therefore remain irremediable if "the novel instinct" (Hirsch 171) that grasps the subject is to remain. The narrator's mother is thus forever lost, or, if she remains, only does so incompletely, as an enduring reminder of lack that the phantasy can only exploit and never resolve. The powerful death of the mother, imagined by Tompkins, can therefore be understood as the opening up of an inscriptive space that is at the same time an affective commodity. This "heroic" sacrifice makes of the mother a text whose circulation becomes a mode of communion, or, in Anderson's terms, a shared imaginary, whose affective power consolidates a reading public, consumers bound by their shared object choice.

If dying is akin to heroism, then, in Child's sentimental historiography, death is the hero. It is death that allows the historical community to become geographically located, it creates and maintains sentimental ties above and beyond those "of interest," and it permits the story its historiographical posture from which the cultivated relationship to the past effects cultural work in the present. Death is literally central to *Hobomok*. Despite his eponymous presence, Hobomok remains a titular subject, the relationship between the Indian chief and Mary consigned to a few chapters in the last third of the work. The majority of the work instead focuses on the personalities and conflicts within the white settlement, particularly the religious debates that threaten the stability of the group. But at the physical and narrative center of the novel, the

narrative of the community changes from a focus on dogmatic conflict to various confrontations with loss. From Sally's marriage and subsequent move to Plymouth, to Charles's social death at the hands of the Puritan elders, consequent exile and supposed watery grave, a feeling of separation and mourning builds throughout the heart of the romance, culminating in the melodramatic death scenes of Lady Arabella and Mary's mother. These two deaths function as the sentimental spectacle that raises the novel's central question of community, of how to build and sustain a community in the harsh new world. The interracial romance, the focus of the reviewers' disgust, only functions as part of the denouement of this central scene. It is what leads the heroine away from her social role, her "wayward fate" (16) that temporarily impedes her from accessing what these deaths would accomplish. The pair's theatrical demise reflects the "painful power of tragic representation" that the narrator signals as a mode of confederation, a coming together through the emotional excitation of the spectacle (58). This "tragic representation" preys upon what the narrator sees as a "fundamental principle in the human mind" (58), the "love of excitement" that finds its release in these sad spectacles that constitute and reconstitute, that establish and affirm, a community. At the heart of Child's narrative we find exactly this generative tragedy; it is through the deaths of the two white mothers that the community consolidates as both a sentimental affiliation and a geographical location.

Even before the mothers' deaths the settlement suffers from a high mortality rate, evinced not only in the body count at the center of the novel but also in the continual references made to those nameless settlers already lost during the crisis described at the beginning of the novel. But notable figures like the pious Reverend Higginson do not become notable in their deaths; Higginson slips by without the excitement of "tragic representation" afforded to the dead

mothers. The Reverend was a divisive figure, holding a hard line against dissenters with his insistence that "the threshold of hell is paved with toleration" (65). If death functions, as I argue, as a means of communion and incorporation, it is understandable that this religious figure, in his restricted conception of the Church and community, is supplanted by the twinned maternal deaths.

One of these deaths belongs to Lady Arabella Johnson, whose celebrated arrival to the colonies quickly moves toward grief at her mortal withdrawal. Lady Arabella's rapid departure from life and the narrative may seem like a strange place to locate significant acts, but in the Lady's short appearance she manages to accomplish a fundamental task: she dies. Immediately after her arrival, her health begins to fade and she languishes alongside the long-suffering Mary Conant, elder. Mary's sentimental connection to the Lady and her physical proximity to Mary's mother ascribe to her a maternal role. Lady Arabella is held on par with that sacred mother; she is a reflection of the older Mary Conant. The two literally share one deathbed, doubling the experience of maternal loss. But Lady Arabella's death holds influence over a community greater than the immediate individual family unit. It is through Lady Arabella's death that the romance illustrates the conversion of sentimental attachment to the body into a similarly affective attachment to the land.

The new world seems to consume the Lady, and in her death she becomes part of the environment that seemed so vampiric and threatening. But instead of lamenting her choice to follow her husband to the new world, Lady Arabella dismisses the causal relationship between settlement and suffering. "The time of my departure hath come and what matters it whether it be in England or America?" she asks her husband when he voices regret at their relocation (110).

The question denies America's responsibility for the death of the loved object, displacing the idea of the dangerous environment that has already claimed so many lives. On her deathbed, her husband's complaint, "But for my selfish love, you might be living in ease and comfort" is answered with "In the short space we have been allowed to sojourn together, I have enjoyed more than all my life beside" (110). The New World is therefore transformed into the site of desire as it represents the sacrifices made, the distances traveled in order to be with the one she loves. Lady Arabella projects the landscape as the locus of love and its necessary self-abnegation. "I have come into the wilderness too…" Lady Arabella tells Mary when faced with her first rough, meager meal, "But 'sweet is a dinner of herbs where love is'" (97). Arabella declares the sacrifice of emigration and the foundation of a new community, here exemplified in the limits imposed on luxurious consumption, to be *in good taste*. The wilderness and her new life in it is "sweet." The family meal, the act of eating together is thus a communal and communalizing act, one in which the participants consume shared objects and experience what Freud argues is the connection between the oral drive and identification. Here, narcissism is sublimated, allowing these individuals to gather in the bond of shared object choice. Sweet may be the meager meal where love is, but love is *there* because of the meal's ritual affirmation of that libidinal energy.

While her "what matters it" statement serves to ameliorate her husband's relationship to America, its dismissal of location occults the cultural work that her death effects. Lady Arabella's death acts in the foundational, national narrative precisely because she dies in America. Despite the insistent indigenous presence, made known through continual threats of violence, the land is described as vacant or tractless; through her interment, Lady Arabella comes

to inhabit and domesticate it. The settlers continually invoke the image of the desert to describe their surroundings and, in a powerful statement of the "self-annihilating power of vacancy" (Vaux 135) (135), the narrator's ancestral voice recalls the bewilderment at confronting the dark, expansive, and empty new world (7). But as the novel moves forward, the land becomes increasingly habitable, marked by the population. The surviving settlers, happily greeting their newly arrived compatriots on the shore, are in stark contrast to the frightening void of the unmarked ocean and empty land initially met by the narrator; there, man "had rarely been upon these waves and the records of his boasted art were not found in these deserts." This unmarked space, his blank page, fills the witness with a sense of isolation and insignificance, causing him to shrink "from the contemplating of human nothingness" (7). It is not until death itself provides an inscribable surface that the settlers are able to locate and narrate their new community.

By inhabiting or becoming part of it, the Lady, as the object of desire for her husband, becomes the means for an intense, almost erotic attachment to the land itself. When he visited her grave he "laid down his head and wept. He arose, and for awhile rested his melancholy gaze on the bright sun and verdant earth;" afterwards he prayed to God to forgive "this worship of an earthly idol" (112). In this ceremony Johnson mourns his wife by fetishizing her place of burial, displacing his desire, and its manifestation in worship, onto the land itself. His idol is not only his deceased partner, but also the earth in which she has been placed, asserting the space of the burial plot as a social one, not only of commemoration but also communion (Goody 451). Mr. Johnson's fatal attachment allows him to continue the foundational work he started, not in Shawmut, but rather by locating himself permanently on his land at Tri-Mountain. "Bury me in the lot which I have laid out at Tri-Mountain," he says, "That at the great judgment-day I may

rise among the heritage which I have feebly endeavored to build up" (112). Through this statement, Johnson manifests a distinctly historical consciousness, locating himself in a causal relationship with a future that he stands to inherit. The heritage is not familial (Johnson has no children) but rather communal; to that community location he gifts the constructive work of his life and similarly that of his death. Child attaches an extra-textual note to this statement that shows the extent to which Mr. Johnson did indeed affect/effect the future community by his decision. "This request was complied with," the authorial voice notes, "And the first burying-place in Boston was laid out around his grave" (112). The foundational moment for the city, the deaths take place in 1629 and Boston was founded in 1630, is thus supported by the affective, structural work of death. In this way the act of burial consecrates a place, the "here" of community, by connecting that "here" to a body in the ground. Like Cooper's *Pioneers*, one of the texts Child had imagined claiming readers as it moved across the land, her novel becomes a conquering discourse of its own. The interment of Arabella and her husband, like Natty's, *inhabits* the wilderness. In *The Pioneers*, Cooper's narrator puts forth that the groundbreaking work of the pioneer is "succeeded by the permanent improvements of the yeoman who intends to leave his remains to moulder under the sod which he tills, or, perhaps, of the son, who, born in the land, piously wishes to linger around the grave of his father" (16). The work of death *grounds* the social establishment indicated by the "permanent improvements," marking first upon the ground and so locating a place onto which to project those pious wishes, a location around which to linger. In this way *The Pioneers* foreshadows Natty's foundational final act when his home is replaced with a small cemetery. When Oliver and Elizabeth, the young couple united by Natty's efforts, visit the area, the Leatherstocking himself declares the graves to be "wholesome

sights to young as well as old" (450), indicating their reflective and educational purpose. These are sights/sites of devotion as well as incorporation, the gravestones are texts to consume both the living and the dead, bringing them together and tying the living to that sacred land. Just as Natty's monument on the prairie demonstrates to "traveler and the trader… a spot where a just white-man sleeps" (*Prairie* 386), Johnson's grave becomes a marker of white presence in the "desert" around which to establish the new outposts of 'civilization.' Death, as both of these foundational narratives show, is a sentimental marker on the land, one that strengthens and maintains settlements, providing an affective geography in which the community can locate itself.

The first of the twinned deaths at the heart of the novel, the death of Mary's mother also effects this sentimental bonding but on a more intimate level. While Lady Arabella's death functions as an affective location for the community, Mary Conant's death works to consolidate its smaller constituent, the family, by giving the father and daughter a space onto which to inscribe the sentimental terms of conciliation. This consolidation is done in large part through Mr. Conant's sentimental education. While she was alive, Mary's mother functioned as a mediator between father and daughter; proclaiming love and loyalty to them both while neither seem capable of reconciling on their own. After the series of losses begin to affect Mary's mental stability, her father reflects on their distanced relationship: "He felt that he had, in reality, known very little of Mary, except through the medium of her mother" (126). The act of death and the sentimental injunctions of the deathbed provide new terms through which the father can relate to his daughter. His wife's death moves Conant, the cold, vitriolic Puritan, from his habitual harangue to the "language of tears" (Tompkins, 132). At his dead wife's side, Conant abstains

from filtering the experience through religious discourse and instead allows himself to cry. “He stood by the corpse of who for twenty years had lain in his bosom,” the narrator says, “and he heeded not that the big, bright tears fell fast upon her bed” (109). This lachrymal release is repeated several times after the death scene and is posited against the emotional vacuum of the Puritan discourse. When Mary is assumed dead, Conant allows the release of “a few reluctant tears,” letting them “lay undisturbed upon his furrowed cheek.” This emotional act is quickly checked by the narrator who asserts, “Perhaps had he known the near approach of his minister, they had never been shed” (131). Religion, or rather the public demonstration of religion, here acts as an impediment to sentiment, “the voice of nature” that Conant “stifled” in his public performance of grief where “[he] hid all his better feelings beneath the cold mask of austerity” (119). It is this cold mask that the religious leaders praise, the unemotional front lauded as an example of Christian grief. Skelton goes so far as to make this false Conant a model for the community. He says: “If every man bears his part of the public calamities as well as you have borne the death of your child, I have no doubt the Lord will smile upon our undertakings” (131). But this austerity is carefully constructed as unnatural, false, and the reader is privy to Conant’s private emotional grief, his tearful “better feelings” in which he indulges away from the public eye. These tears represent a “softened state of feeling” (119), and it is this sentimental awakening that allows him to recognize the limits of his dogmatic rhetoric and to question his intolerant positions taken in regards to Mary and Charles.

This self-reflection is directly related to the spectacle of death; “There is nothing,” the narrator asserts, “like the chamber of death to still the turbulence of passion, and overcome the loftiness of pride” (109). This is evident in Conant’s reflections on Charles’s assumed death

when his conscience "inquired whether he had not in some measure mistaken obstinacy and pride for conscientious zeal; and in the humbleness of the moment, he acknowledged that christians were too apt to mistake the voice of selfishness for the voice of God" (119). This moderation of temperament is supported by the invocation of his wife's body: "His earliest enemies had been of the English church, and he had seen his wife drooping and dying amid the poverty which his religious opinions had brought upon her" (119). The specter of his wife thus continues to haunt Conant, he sees the text of his life written out on her body, and his sentimental invocation of her suffering form impedes his customary dogmatic expression.

The gap opened up in his previously rancorous discourse is not only the result of the suffering body, but also Mrs. Conant's powerful deathbed requests imparted to Conant (and Mary). "If Brown comes back," his wife tells him, "You must remember our own thwarted love, and deal kindly with Mary," to which her husband avers "Verily, my dear wife, your dying request shall be obeyed" (108). His wife requests that he identify his position with that of his daughter, his wife translating the love affair into a repetition of their own. His concession to obedience speaks to the power cultivated by this dying figure as her behest forces Conant to "this softened state of feeling" with his daughter. He speaks to her with tears in his eyes (119) and actually delights in his new conciliatory position, in the prospect of sublimating the aggressive narcissism of his previous bigotry to his new identification with his daughter. When this concession to family is frustrated by the news of Charles's death he reflects:

> Since the death of his wife, he had thought, with a good deal of concealed pleasure, how very graciously he would make a sacrifice to the peace of her only child; and now that there was no hope of making this atonement for his past

> harshness, he felt more disappointment than he would have been willing to acknowledge. (119)

His actions towards Mary are filtered through his relationship with his wife ("the peace of her only child," he is to deal with Mary in the terms of "our own thwarted love") and so require the affectionate, tender approach of the deathbed. The "concealed pleasure" and the consequently excessive and therefore unacknowledged disappointment, gesture towards the sentimental work of loosening the restrictive emotional bonds of Puritan society. These affective measures can maintain the family; it is the cruel disregard for sentimental attachment, the hard-line, dogmatic stance that keeps its members from communion.

The dead mother's voice seems to gird this sentimental resistance to the divisive coldness of the Puritanical emotional divorce. After he attempts to destroy Mary's prayer book, Conant feels "the sting of self-reproach" because "the words of his dying wife seemed to resound in his ears, as she said, 'Be kind to Mary for my sake'" (126). Mary had spoken the same dying request to her daughter as well: "*For my sake*…be dutiful to your good father as you have been to me" (109, emphasis added). The father and daughter thus become stand-ins for the mother herself, the sentimental power of her admonition is a logic of substitution under which the two are to treat each other as if they were her. If the Christian grief invoked by the Puritan elders indicates a complete separation from the dead, the continued presence of the dead body, the incorporation of her voice and presence into the bodies of the text, into the bodies of her husband and daughter, represents the possibility of a persisting responsibility to the dead who, by being the shared love object between the two, impresses them into her service and thus creates a community out of that indebtedness. This protracted attachment introduces compassion into Conant's relationship with

his daughter and it is this that allows him to change his posture towards her from one of censure to one of acceptance and reconciliation. “Come to my arms, my deare childe,” he writes to her, and this “mixed feeling of compassion and affection” (149) permits the consolidation of the family unit: patriarch, son-in-law, daughter, and grandchild, in the face of dogmatic and even racial difference.

This softened, sentimental attitude represents a marked difference between Conant and the acrimonious schismatics, a difference that is both affected and produced by the presence of death. Previously, the contentious environment of the settlement was answered by three feminine reactions (57): Sally’s unthinking gaiety and Mary’s weariness both represent the failures of uncritical acceptance and foreclosed rejection in affecting change and conciliation in the social system. It is the third response, Mrs. Conant’s revelatory yet sympathetic gaze, marked by the approach of death and “its calm, heavenly influence” that allows the subject communion through its sentimental posture. “She looked,” the narrator says, “With compassion on the wild and ever-varying light of human doctrines” (58). The presence of death allows Mary to recognize and overcome the worldly, constructed boundaries that maintain schism, separation, in favor of a more humanist, inclusive sentimental gaze. It is this compassionate gaze, produced and reproduced by sentimental excitement, “the painful power of tragic representation,” that allows the strident Conant to soften the tone of his rhetoric, to find release for his ‘natural’ sentiment, and through this, to affect the reconciliation that forms the basis of community. The sentimental construction therefore gestures towards a model of toleration; if the Conant-Brown family is the metonymic representation of the proto-national community, then it is this affective ligature, not

the cold Puritanical mask, that serves as the foundation from which Child, her narrator, his editor speak.

This shifting of the foundational narrative re-places the historical subject, remodeling the "heritage" left to the present community, changing emphasis from the harsh and intolerant Puritan community to the sentimental and inclusive family unit. This shift changes the relationship to the past for Child's audience, evincing what Bruce Mills refers to as the pervasive "disenchantment with Calvinism" (17), that affected historical engagement with the Puritans for the Unitarian community of Boston. This change in the foundational narrative is therefore reflective of contemporary realities. "By the time Child's novel was published in 1824…" Mills writes, "Calvinists suffered a second-class status and Unitarians controlled the institutions of power in Boston" (17). Mills sees this directly reflected in Mary's rejection of her community's affective neglect. He says, "[Mary] is unable to experience suitable companionship with her father and other villagers because they have attempted to govern her affections with harsh Calvinist doctrine" (13). "What drove Mary to despair," Mills says, "And in part compelled the Boston religious community to reform their faith was their heritage of a harsh and often unfeeling faith" (17). It is in this way that Child's book, according to Mills, "indicates that she understood prevailing Unitarian religious views. In significant ways, Hobomok writ large New England's, and especially Boston's, struggle to discard the remnants of an orthodox religious faith and thus resonates with the beliefs of those who directly inspired Child's work" (16).

But, as I have shown, Child's novel is not about negation or rupture, but rather recognition and reconciliation between the constituents of the white settlement. The novel does not "discard," rather it serves as an act of recovery. The narrator says:

> In this enlightened and liberal age, it is perhaps too fashionable to look back upon those early sufferers in the cause of the Reformation, as a band of dark, discontented bigots. Without a doubt, there were many broad, deep shadows in their characters, but there was likewise bold and powerful light. (6)

Instead of distancing the community from its "heritage," Child's novel recreates the foundational subject, shifting it from its previous location in the "stern and unsympathetic faith" (Mills 13) to the "bold and powerful light" of the inclusive, tolerant, and sentimental family bond. Unitarians wanting to throw off their Puritan past, wanting to reimagine the structures of their family, find, through their sentimental involvement with the text, their bond to this past renewed. This alteration creates a sense of continuity between the past of Puritan settlement and the present of Unitarian Boston; it strengthens the historical legitimacy of the Unitarians who can then be seen as the rightful heirs of the "native"[3] community. In this way, reading Child's historical romance requires one to reconsider, as Baym says, "national origins, characters, and values" (155). On the ground claimed by the maternal grave, Child's romance exalts the Puritan forefathers and fosters a sentimental paternity that denies the "barren" nature of Puritan history (3).

This transfiguration, as both a transformation and a revelation, is produced by the historiographical posture taken up in the elaborately constructed narrative frame. A key figure in the nativist relocation is the unnamed narrator, the figure who initially takes up the project of writing history. He intends to place New England in the national narrative by recreating it in the historical romance, a form that, by its very popularity, threatens to "conquer" the American

[3] As I have previously noted, the narrative as a whole relocates the native community to the white settlement. When I refer to nativism, it is identification with this foundational *white* community, not the native population.

imagination, eliding the foundational importance of the Northeast. "Barren and uninteresting as New England history is, I feel there is enough connected with it, to rouse the dormant energies of my soul" (4). The project is thus formulated as one of recovery, predicated upon and reproducing a nativist sentimental location. The narrator has an intimate connection with the past through his ancestor, and by exhuming this body is able to claim (author)ity for the narrative and legitimacy for his national/nativist identification.

The narrator demonstrates this nativist exuberance in the opening paragraphs of the novel, in which he locates the reader by indicating his own ties to the land and community. He begins the narrative of the Conant family and Salem by stating: "I never view the thriving villages of New England, which speak so forcibly to the heart, of happiness and prosperity, without feeling a glow of national pride, as I say, 'this is my own, my native land'" (5). The language of identification is coded by the language of ownership: "this is my own" he says, "my native land." But the ownership is not exclusive, rather it is communal, emphasized by the community-minded narrative but also performed in the confusion of voice in the frame. Who is the narrator? The frame sets him out to be an amateur writer who, with the help of an editor/friend, manages to publish the narrative of a long lost ancestor. But the frame doubles up on itself, confuses the voices, the levels of mediation. One is never sure if the narrative voice of the story is this unidentified narrator, his ancestor, his editor, or the author herself. For instance, it is the editor who provides the historical pamphlets to his author/friend. Is it then the *editor's* ancestor, appropriated by the authorial voice, who speaks in the narrator's voice? Or did he serendipitously give the author back his own dead? Or perhaps the ancestor is a literary device of mediation in the novel that reflects that same device in the frame (the ancestor is, after all, not

introduced in the preface but rather in the first chapter of the narrative). This multiplicity of voices multiplies claims to ownership, and the single ancestor becomes the communal ancestor: this spokesman for the past belongs to us all.

This *communal* ownership is important to the historiographical posture, as this posture is predicated on the power to take up the dead and write upon their bodies. In *Sensational Designs*, Jane Tompkins argues for the power of the dead in affecting the sentimental reform narrative, but the dead have no agency. In this way I am claiming Tompkins's theory only to reassign the active subject. It is not the dead body that speaks, it is not the dead body that affects society, but rather those living bodies that would manipulate, torture, and exhume dead bodies for narrative purposes. These dead women do not write but are written upon, and so function as the material medium through which the author asserts her author-ity over the text of history. In the writing of history, the selection of the object for analysis is self-referential; the historian, "haunted by presuppositions" (Certeau *Writing* 23), "chooses 'subjects' conforming to its place of observation" (31). The body upon which one writes must therefore be recognizable, shared, in order to legitimate the historian's work.

The recognition of this body is double, an acknowledgment of the coherence of the historical representation, a recognizable figure of the past, that is also as a figure of discourse through which the present can narrate. The present must believe that the dead can talk. "The dead," French historian Michel de Certeau says, "are the objective figure of an exchange among the living" (*Writing* 46). The dead allow the initial act of separation that permits one to speak, giving one a place onto which to impose this speech, and, in such analytic discourse as history, the distance from the subject through which one is authorized to evaluate. Such speech remains

"a discourse of the dead…a discourse in the third person" (46, emphasis in the original), meaning that the mediation of the speechless body allows the historian to occult her narrative responsibility, the interested nature of her discourse. By speaking through or for the vacated body, the dead body, the "dead letter" (Child 40), the author elides her own construction of the narrative. In *Hobomok*, the long dead ancestor apparently speaks, with only the substitution of modern speech; "I shall," the narrator tells the reader, "take the liberty of substituting my own expressions for his antiquated and almost unintelligible style" (7). But the confusing narrative interruptions, moving out of the chronological limitations of the ancestor, hint at the objectification of this body, its use as a space onto which the present writes, rather than one that speaks for itself. In making possible the writing of history and occulting its interested narrative, death valorizes the historical romance, making it the substantial "food for reflection," and not the "confection" of the overtly manipulated and manipulable novel.

The dead body thus creates a space onto which a foundational narrative can be written, one of validation for both the text as a cultural production and characters within the narrative itself. Death attaches the subject to the land, the community, and the narrative, allowing the sentimentality and nativist self-recognition through which nationality and nationalism is produced and reproduced. The sentimental ligature requires the spectacle of death, and the continued presence of the dead body as an affective haunting maintains community ties. This is significant because these sentimental foci conceal the marginalizing work that death also effects. The important cultural work of the two white women is in stark contrast to the death scenes narratively displaced from the texts. The most startling of these vanishing acts is that of Hobomok himself, who structures his departure from his family and the narrative as a death.

"Hobomok will go far off among some of the red men in the west," he says, "They will dig him a grave…I will be buried among strangers, and none shall black their faces for the unknown chief" (139-140). This removal-as-death effectively "disappears" the character, allowing him to leave no remains. The fetishistic object is therefore removed as well. In this way, the historical narrative excludes the Indian as a recognizable subject, and the white community's own culpability for his disappearance**.** Hobomok *speaks his own death sentence*, and thus removes himself, the Native, as an obstacle for national consolidation. This un-mournable death removes the problematic subject without leaving evidence of an un-narrated, silent space, an "open wound of secrecy" (Ronell 97). Effacing the issue of racial toleration, the marginalized death of the Indian allows both the community within and without the novel to focus on the consolidation of a white, Christian, American subject.

**III. AnOther Mother**

Against this hearty reconciliation of the white, Christian American community lingers the specter of another mother, Hobomok's mother. This Native mother has the potential to serve as a third mother figure for Mary, a potential substitution emphasized by the fact that Mary plays the role of nurse not only for her own mother and Arabella but previously for this Native mother as well. It is Hobomok's mother's ailing health and Mary's nursing that instigated the emotional tie between the Indian chief and his future wife. "If something within taught him to copy…all the kind attention of the white man," the narrator says, explaining Hobomok's devotion to Mary, "'twas gratitude for the life of his mother which she had preserved" (84). It is this mother who celebrates the news of their marriage by dancing, singing and caressing Mary with "frantic joy"

(124), it is this mother who nurses Mary in her deranged state (130) and it is this mother who tends to Mary in her married life. "All the kind attentions which could suggest themselves to the mind of a savage," the narrator says, "were paid by *her Indian mother*" (135, emphasis added). Having worked so diligently to demonstrate the conciliatory work of the maternal figure, her role in the generation of community, the novel here attempts to offer an alternative to the dominant structure, one birthed by the Other mother. But, in opposition to the generative acts of the two white mothers, this foundational potential is frustrated by the death of the "squaw," a death that is disclosed but never narratively present. After the narrator's distant and brief description of Mary's life with Hobomok (spanning two years in two paragraphs, a period in which "nothing occurred of any importance to our story" save the brief note that Mary gave birth to a son 136), she/he/I/We declare "After this general view of things, we must now pass over to….1633, and leave the interim to the reader's imagination" (137). It is within this span of silence, the narrator says later, that "the old squaw had lately died" (137). Unlike her white counterparts, this mother gains nothing by death; this other mother shrinks into the shadows much like her son will do. These Native deaths thus demonstrate a melancholic disavowal that takes the form of the "never never," a refusal of acknowledgement described by Judith Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power*. This refusal denies both love *and* loss, saying "I have never loved and therefore never lost the other." This silence forecloses the possibility of identification; the haunting Native American described by Renée Bergland is thus a product of deep structure, an inability to grieve that girds the subject's fundamental social identification. This barred identification remains exiled through the ritual practices of mourning. The characters, the readers do not return "again and again to [the] defiled grave" of the Native (Bergland 22). Where is Hobomok or his mother buried after

all? How can I return to *no*-place? Rather, these readers return to the monuments dedicated to the white inhabitants of the land, the white deaths that endure as the "humic foundation" for contemporary communities (Harrison x).

I would like to conclude by looking briefly at a similar miscegenist national romance that was produced and continues to be avidly consumed in a country whose definition of "national origins, characters, and values" depended and in some ways continues to depend heavily on the valorization of racial mixing.[4] José de Alencar was a Brazilian statesman who became one of the Empire's most famous authors, producing romances, plays and essays in a prolific twenty-year writing career. One of his most enduring works, *Iracema* was published in 1865 and is considered the second of an Indianist trilogy that includes the works *O Guaraní* (1857) and *Ubirajara* (1874). These romances share a similar exaltation of the Indian and interracial relationships (save the last, which is set before contact), but they do not have interlocking plots or characters, like the Leatherstocking series. Despite this, these Brazilian romances were considered remarkably similar to Cooper's works, and Alencar was frequently compared to that

[4] The deployment of mestiçagem as a trope of national unification, while still popular in contemporary discourse, can be traced to the consciously national cultural projects embarked upon in Brazil that mirror that call made by the *North American Review* described earlier in the chapter. One of the most famous of these incidents was the contest for defining national historiography sponsored by the newly-founded Instituto Hisórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (Burns 21-41). The winning essay, by the German Karl Friedrich Philipp von Martius was titled "Como se Deve Escrever a Hisória do Brasil" in which the author writes:

> "Anyone who undertakes to write the history of Brazil, a country which promises so much, should never lose sight of the elements which contributed to the development of man there. These diverse elements come from the three races, namely: the copper-colored, or American; the white, or Caucasian; and the black, or Ethiopian. Because of the reciprocal and changing relations of the three races, the present population consists of a novel mixture, whose history therefore has a very particular stamp." (23)

North American writer, even to the extent of plagiarism.[5] But instead of Cooper's "dread of miscegenation," critics praise *Iracema* for its celebration of mestiçagem, particularly in comparison with its North American counterpart (Bellei 26). Critic Robert Stam writes: "Whereas U.S. tradition venerates the Euro American founding fathers, the Brazilian includes an indigenous mother... Brazilian literature lauded cross-racial heterosexual romance...as the generative matrix of a mestiço nation" (Fitz 65). I would like to reconsider *Iracema*'s "generative matrix" by looking at how death and mourning might function as a mode of redress for the categorical transgression of sexual miscegenation. Is the cross-racial romance actually lauded or generative in Alencar's work? What are the implications for a mestiço heritage if, in his most famous coupling, the foundational figure of this "indigenous mother" neither survives nor accomplishes the same kind of re*mark*able deaths as the white women in *Hobomok*, the foundation for a Native *sema*? I argue that, like its North American counterparts, the Brazilian's "dream" of mestiçagem is overwritten by the work of death. The spectacle of "tragic representation" in this romance does work upon the mother, but not in the same influential manner as the white mothers in *Hobomok.* Here, the tragic representation of the Native mother's demise, Iracema's destruction and death, functions as a ritual of redressive machinery, a purging through consumption.

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[5] Renata Wasserman notes that Cooper's work was available in translation and Alencar himself goes so far as to deny this charge in his *Como e porque sou romancista* (1893). Sergio Bellei notes that "As referências ao relacionamento Cooper-Alencar são relativamente frequentes na crítica do século XIX: Joaquim Nabuco, Antônio Henriques Leal, Pinheiro Chagas. São também geralmente etnocêntricas, registrando antes um débito do que um ganho original" (23) [references to the Cooper-Alencar relationship are relatively frequent in criticism written in the nineteenth century….These are also in general ethnocentric, registering an original advantage [over Cooper] rather than a debt].

Alencar presents *Iracema,* like Child did for *Hobomok*, as a contribution to the search for a distinctly national literature, the search, as Alencar describes it, for "poesia inteiramente brasileira" (86) [an entirely Brazilian poetry]. The national romance, Doris Sommer argues in *Foundational Fictions*, engages the reader in a sentimental entanglement of erotics and politics that functions as an allegory for national political organization. In the miscegenist romances under this banner, Sommer traces an argument that this sexual coupling could function as "a way of annihilating difference and constructing a deeply horizontal, fraternal dream of national identity" (39). But against this "dream" of flattening categorical hierarchies, structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss asserts that the use of such cultural mythology towards cognitive resolution "inevitably traps the human imagination in a web of dualisms." Wendy Doninger summarizes his argument by saying: " Each dualism (such as male/female) produces a tension that seems resolved by the use of a mediating term (such as androgyny), but then that new term turns out to be one-half of a new dualism such as androgyny/sexlessness ad infinitum" (viii, emphasis in original). Mestiçagem, then, does not resolve or render horizontal the relationship but rather perpetuates the hierarchical strain of the binary; a focus on mestiçagem contains within it an oblique fixation on the idea of purity. This fixation can be seen in the intra- and extra-narrative processes of redress. Those actions meant to resolve breach and crisis function as purification rituals, querying the resolution Alencar posits in the form of mestiçagem.

Alencar's miscegenist romance maintains a fixation with purity much like Cooper's "man without cross," a loyalty to racial boundaries that is effected by the work of death in the novel. In Iracema, Alencar's mestiçagem is not the harmonious union of different groups but rather representative of what social anthropologist Victor Turner terms social drama, in which a

disruption, or breach, occurs leading to a situation of crisis that must be redressed by some corrective measure. The apparent bridging offered by mestiçagem, the recuperation of marginal subjects in terms of race and gender through sexual reproduction, is undermined by the redressive machinery of death and desire through which Alencar effaces, evacuates and makes impossible those subject positions.

In the prologue to Iracema, Alencar notes the origin of the novel to be the legends and traditions of his native region Ceará, attempting in the narrative to reconcile history with fictional romance in order find a "native son" that is neither Indian nor European. "Subtitled a 'legend,'" Wasserman points out, "the book could also be called a myth of place, since it tells how certain topographical accidents received their names – what stories give them meaning" ("Red and White" 818). I would argue that the mythical structure imbues not only the topographical aspects of the novel but also, according to Harrison's theory of *hic jacet*, the location of an original human presence for the region. The work of mythology is "dialectic in its attempt to make cognitive sense out of the chaotic data provided by nature" (Lévi-Strauss viii). In the case of Alencar, the author must confront the colonial encounter from a nationalist position that did not exist at the time. In so doing, he attempts to destabilize or open up the European/Indian or Colonizer/Colonized binary, attempting a cognitive resolution to a seemingly contradictory state: being Other but at home, being the invader and yet identifying with the invaded territory. He reconstructs the past to align with a contemporary imagined community in formation, explaining a Brazilian national sentiment that resides outside both terms of the Colonizer/Colonized binary, an attempt that elides colonial violence in favor of a romantic vision of mestiçagem. Eduardo de Assis Duarte notes: "O embate entre nativos e colonizadores fica

reduzido a pano de funda para o idílio amoroso estabelecido entre Martim ... e a bela Iracema" (Duarte 195) [the struggle between the natives and the colonizers is reduced in favor of the romantic idyll established between Martim…and the beautiful Iracema]. It is upon this scene, that of the conqueror making contact with the native, that Alencar attempts to locate a third term, a project that is itself, and takes the form of, redressive machinery in that it attempts to resituate a conflict that impedes a social project, namely that of identity politics during the period of rising nationalism. An elite citizen, writing from the urban center, Alencar must find a legitimate way in which to distance the white Brazilians such as himself from the other white, urban elite: the European, the Portuguese. But Alencar's third term, from which he can assert not only affiliation but also filiation, is not an independent term itself. The mestiço does not unite the binary White/Indian, Colonizer/Colonized, bridging the gap between the two identities. Instead, the term displaces the crisis into a new binary: mestiçagem/pureza, mixed blood and pure blood. Alencar's mestiço myth attempts resolution and succeeds only insofar as it represses the dualism on which the mediating term is predicated. This project of reconstruction, framed in the tone of a legend, "deixa ver a convivência do literário com o ideológico" (Duarte 198) [allows one to see the coexistence of literature and ideology]. As critic Djelal Kadir argues, the division between history and ideology is always an irreducible tautology when written upon the American landscape ("Commons" 600). Kadir traces this back to the naming of America, or Amerige as it was initially labeled on maps. This neologism, he argues, literally translates to "land of no-place" and thus, from its very beginnings, is posited as a blank page, the material exposed to the inscription of the European imagination (Kadir *Columbus* 60). One could insist that this semantic discovery reflects the somatic construction of America as well, often represented as a woman

(and a naked woman at that) in artistic depictions of conquest. Following Kadir's discovery, it is possible to argue that this "no place" is in fact the indigenous body, and more specifically the indigenous female body that is *only* a vacant surface, that in fact has no original wholeness for which to mourn. Alencar's machinery of redress pushes Iracema towards this identification with the land, not an inhabitation or marking by *sema* but rather a devouring, complete identification that annihilates the subject as she becomes one with it. She is always vacant, always waiting to be filled.

In *Iracema*, the area that most explicitly engages with the issue of purity is that of gender and the attendant issue of sexuality. In the author's own words, gender is central to Alencar's national project. In his "Carta ao Dr. Jaguaribe" Alencar describes the formation of his novel, noting that he had become engaged with the idea of creating a literary work inspired by the legends of his native region, as well as his recent historical and biographical work, when he made a trip to Ceará in 1848. He indicts the figure of the woman, though, as ultimately bringing the project to fruition. He says of existing history: "Faltava-lhe o perfume que derrama sobre as paixões do homem a beleza da mulher" (86) [it was missing the perfume that the beauty of women spills over the passions of man]. The author notes that it is the corporeal figure of the woman, the physical affect, that catalyzes the expression of the work's project. The national project, creating an affective attachment to the land, is explicitly connected to desire for and desire cultivated by the female body. "O perfume" of the woman's beauty incites "as paixões" of mankind. To this end Iracema's body is written as connected to the land that she inhabits. "A filha do sertão" (69) [the daughter of the jungle] erases the boundary between sexual and colonial desire. This appropriation of the female body by the author is the cultivation of

imagined communities based on desire. Here, the libidinal connection to a shared object is explicit, but the family romance of the Brazilian seems to take a strange turn as it seems here to exalt the *maternal* figure, disregarding the father's role. But Alencar's narrative insists that the perfidious desire does indeed belong to the mother, reinveting the Native mother in the androynous position of both exalted father and defiled mother. The narrative seems to offer her a subject position only to inscribe upon her the mark of abjection, to outlaw that very position as chaotic, confused and, as the sign of abjection is a violent expulsion, perhaps even vomiting, a position that is "revolting," or at least in "very bad taste."

There are two women present in the novel that represent the object of desire for the colonizing male gaze but there is only one physical female body, that of the eponymous Iracema. The other woman, Martim's "virgem branca" [white virgin] is continually invoked but never corporeally realized, a fact that does not diminish the importance of her imagined figure. Even though she is never physically present in the narrative, Martim's European fiancé provides the white socio-normative foil for Iracema, a comparison aggravated by the racially-inflected aberrant sexuality of the native woman.[6] This other woman, Martim's lost love object that he maintains as a site of desire, obscures the reader's sentimental attachment to Iracema herself, emphasizing her difference from a recognizable cultural heritage. When he is lying with Iracema in his arms, a sentimental moment in which the reader, aligned racially and linguistically with the Portuguese man, should herself feel love for and a connection with the Native, Martim

[6] The relationship between Martim and his blond virgin that waits for him is never explicitly articulated but many critics have claimed her as his fiancée. I would argue that the effect of his longing, whether a nostalgia an actual relationship or simply a sexual fantasy, is to marginalize his Indian lover by projecting his desire in racial terms.

distances the reader from the native woman by thinking of home. “Lá o espera a virgem loura dos castos afectos” [There a blond virgin of chaste affection waited for him], an image that he directly contrasts to Iracema with her “olhos negros” [black eyes] and “lascivo talhe” [lewd figure] (44). Even though Iracema is continually referred to as the virgin of her tribe, the vestal keeper of the jurema, she is also explicitly sensual, most markedly in the contrast to the blond woman who represents Martim’s social code of purity, virginity. Alencar presents the Indian’s purity as aberrant from the European idea, estranged from and therefore dangerous to the white warrior’s social structure. Iracema is pure, but an object of sexual desire and a desiring subject herself, a deviant subject in the terms of the “castos afectos” of the far-away blond. This aggressive sexuality, diametrically opposed to the white woman who passively waits, manifests itself explicitly in the initial sexual encounter between Martim and Iracema. While Martim does desire Iracema, he displaces his drive, asking instead for her to provide him with the sacred jurema, indicatively another socially transgressive act of consumption. Iracema, though, answers his call and goes to him while he sleeps, inverting the roles of male aggressor and female passive receptor. Iracema’s aberrant concept of purity is also shown in her own self-misrepresentation after the sexual act. The narrator remarks that “Tupã já não tinha sua virgem” (46) [The Tupi now did not have their virgin], referring obliquely to the completed sex act. Iracema, though, continues to call herself chaste, a confusion of terms that indicates the disorder of the situation and Iracema’s inability to understand the boundaries of purity and defilement. Martim does understand, and recognizes in his decision to leave the Tupã that in their coupling they have clearly disrupted the social structure and that this disruption requires redress. Their act of contact

and contamination results in a social crisis, the breach of their sexual contact forcing the two to remove themselves to the margins, the beach where they then set up their home.

The aberrant sexual personae, Iracema the aggressive seducer and Martim the unconscious, passive object of seduction, also undergo a transformation following their transgression, what Duarte refers to as "o milagre do branqueamento de Iracema" (199) [the miracle of Iracema's whitening]. When they arrive at their new home, Iracema is no longer the aggressive figure she was in her native environment. Instead, her agency becomes vacated; she becomes the passive object that approximates the figure of the white virgin: the quintessential agency-less subject, she who cannot act of her own accord as she exists only in the image, the desire of another. In a reversal of melancholic ego formation, it is Iracema who incorporates the lost object into herself and it is Martim who expels the object that held him in its sway. Duarte says of this process: "Transforma-se o amador na coisa amada, Iracema passa a ser movida pela paixão e pelo desejo de se transformar no objeto do desejo de Martim" (199) [Transforming herself from lover into a loved object, Iracema changes from being moved by passion and desire, transforming into the object of Martim's desire]. This new Iracema he describes as "docemente rendido e conformado com a perda de sua identidade" (199) [sweetly surrendered and resigned to the loss of her identity]. Iracema is both the author and material, the perpetrator and victim of seduction and, through its allegorical extension, of conquest as well. At the same time Martim gains in agency as he pushes away from Iracema, the body that represents the social crisis in which he finds himself. Instead he embraces socially normative masculine behaviors by fighting alongside Poti; abandoning Iracema at the cabin he abjects the domestic and the domestic native female body.

What this transformation approximates is a purification ritual, one in which the aberration that threatens the established social order is expelled. Julia Kristeva, expanding on Mary Douglas's work *Purity and Danger,* argues that the social aggregate is based on a logical order; that which is jettisoned from this "symbolic system" is that which escapes or threatens its rationality. The subject, in defense of such "dirt"[7] becomes a "tireless builder"(8), with a strict "adherence to Prohibition and Law" (16). Martim's rejection of Iracema thus indicts her as an object of this defilement, her agency and sensuality in contrast with his established social order represented by the blond virgin. Her "branqueamento " can therefore be read as an attempt to redress the crisis of contact between the European social order and the Indian other. It is also interesting to read the emphasis on Martim's purity in the light of the crisis of colonial contact. While Iracema is explicitly labeled as pure, Martim is so labeled implicitly and, more importantly, he maintains his purity through his innocence in the sexual contact. When Iracema tempts Martim (à la Eve, as Duarte reads it), the white soldier invokes God to expel the impure thoughts, as an injunction against acting in a transgressive manner: "O cristão repeliu do seio a virgem indiana ... Cerra os olhos para não ver; e enche sua alma com o nome e a veneração de seu Deus: -Cristo! .... Cristo!" (44) [The christian pushed the Indian virgin from his chest…he closed his eyes so that he could not see; and his soul called out with the venerated name of his God: -Christ!...Christ!]. The primer of his social structure, the "religião de sua mãe" (17) [religion of his mother], is the safeguard of the symbolic order that expels the threatened defilement. The name of God is the logos that orients his understanding of such binaries as purity

[7] Douglas defines "dirt" as "all the rejected elements of ordered systems" (35).

and defilement. The Native is here designated as contaminative and irrational while Martim's own mother recalled by his recourse to the "religião de sua mãe," becomes a sanitary refuge.

The verbal exorcism is accompanied by a creation of physical distance, "repeliu do seio a virgem indiana," showing that the crisis of the subject is one of contact; he will recreate this physical repulsion later when he "abandons" Iracema to fight with Poti and, when he does return home, his time spent away from the hut staring at the sea projecting both his national and sexual desire outward, to the Motherland. His consumption of the foreign body leads only to crisis in the social system. It is only in his soporific displacement that he can consume Iracema as he wishes. In his dreams "Podia amá-la, e sugar desse amor o mel e o perfume, sem deixar veneno no seio da virgem" (45) [He could love her and suckle from love the honey and perfume without leaving poison in the virgin's breast]. What the jurema accomplishes is to rid Martim of consciousness, the injunction of social codes, that which places taboo between himself and the aberrant object.[8] The narrative, though, structures the transgressive sexual act in such a way to protect the white soldier's social codes of purity and defilement by displacing agency onto the Indian Other. As previously mentioned, Iracema demonstrates an aberrant sexual agency, one that goes against that of white social structures. Going to him, her actions are described as animal-like, comparing her to "a juruti, que divaga pela floresta, ouve o terno arrulho do companheiro" (45) [the *juruti* (bird) that wanders through the forest listening to the tender cooing of his partner], a comparison that places her outside not only the norm of gender roles, but even that of the human. In the act of transgression, Iracema acts and Martim is transformed into a

[8] In other words, being "on drugs" (under the influence of the sacred *jurema*), outside the realm of the Law and legal sanction, Martim ceases to guard against the abject (Ronell 95-96).

victim, “Immersed in a fantasy state induced by the jurema, Martim can take pleasure from Iracema’s body, without having to take responsibility” (Ferreira-Pinto, 4). As Duarte indicates, “a narrativa exalta a elevação moral de Martim e debita á [Iracema] a responsabilidade por aquela união proibida ... à mulher e à sua magia telúrica todo o poder de sedução, fazendo do homem uma vítima ” (199) [the narrative raises the moral elevation of Martim and makes Iracema responsible for that prohibited union…to the woman and her telluric magic all of the power of seduction, making the man into a victim].

It is therefore Iracema who bears the responsibility of redress and it is indeed she who suffers and dies because of the transgression. Her death, labeled from the start of the novel as the ultimate mode of redress, is therefore the only resolution to the crisis that results from the breach of social codes. Iracema is conscious of her fate, telling Martim that in her death he will be free to pursue the white virgin. The foundational mother, the figure that critics use to set Alencar apart from Cooper, the celebration of heterogeneous society, is thus predicated upon her removal, an abjection of her racial and gendered otherness. Martim cannot be happy with her, in his state of transgression, and therefore even Iracema herself posits her own death, the death of the mother, as a liberating force. It is through the birth of his son that Martim re-attaches himself to the land, “o amor renascera com o júbilo paterno” (80) [love was reborn with the paternal glee] and it is indicatively through the son that the threatening otherness, in the figure of Iracema, is vacated. Duarte remarks on the vampiric nature of the son, who literally sucks the life from Iracema. Because of this loss of life, not only the white husband but also the son is freed from contact with the anomalous parent. Shortly before her death, Iracema hands her son over to Martim, calling him “yours,” not “ours” or “my.” Iracema linguistically withdrawals herself,

and shortly after that her physical body is similarly emptied. This is an important site of absence because the concept of the educating mother, reflected in the ideology of republican motherhood, was commonly held to be the position of women in Brazilian society during the nineteenth-century. This concept posited that mothers held the important social role of primary educators, raising their children to participate in society. "Their contribution to a healthy republic was the production of civic-minded children" (Formichella Elsden xvi).[9] The mother's role was one of educator, the moral compass and therefore a fundamental influence on the development of the child. Iracema's death, her vacated body, allows Martim to take his son back to his homeland, the educational role appropriated by the father, exorcising the potentially dangerous contamination of the Indian influence. The religion of the Other mother is replaced by that of the father, or rather that father's mother, "a religião de sua mãe." This substitution shows how not only the transgressive gender but also racial otherness is excised in the final redress of Iracema's death and subsequent departure of Martim and Moaçir. The conspicuous racial absence, even that of the mestiço son who leaves with his father and does not return (to the narrative or Ceará), enacts a vacating of racial difference, an act of purification that rescues the racial binary from blurring its borders or from its seemingly carnivalesque inversion, restoring privilege and dominance to the White and it marginalizes and effaces the Indian. Moacir's departure from his Native parent coincides with that of little Hobomok in Child's novel. The Indian-ness of little Hobomok is progressively diminished as the boy loses his father, his name, and any connection to native culture. This 'whitening' plays a significant part in buttressing the sentimental

[9] One can see this idea reflected in Brazilian writings of the period including, but not limited to, that of Nísia Floresta.

attachment both between father/grandfather and child as well as Child's audience searching for a recognizable heritage.[10]

In this romance of erotic transgression and Native erasure, *Iracema* becomes a mode of redress for the crisis of colonial contact, the work a mediating term that approximates a liminoid cultural production.[11] The liminoid allows his urban readership an experience of society's margins, where the structure is questioned, crisis reenacted, and then resolved. Liminoid productions are not dangerous to the social structure, in that they are contained and framed as an imitation of reality. By presenting his audience with a sterilized recounting of the colonial encounter, occulting violence with romance and offering the "resolution" of a mestiçagem, the act of narration becomes an act of education. The audience, through its attachment to the native characters in the liminoid production, non-threatening because distant from the reader and, as I have shown, absent in the narrative, are given the gap necessary to cultivate desire. Instead of the anxiety of contact, the audience is given the erotics of exoticism, a discourse that allows one to approximate the Other but also to avoid the contamination of direct contact. This is because, as Wasserman states:

> The exotic arises as a sign of interest on the part of the self in that which is not self. It is not, however, the complete other; it is the acceptable, complementary,

[10] One could read the whitening of these two mixed race children as products of the dominant racial discourse as well. In Brazil, positivist racial science contributed to the popular idea that mixing races would generally *whiten* the population. In Child's context, Hobomok's conversion offered hope to those reformers who declared in what Roy Harvey Pearce calls a "doubled discourse," that the only way for the Native to survive was for him to become more white, or more civilized, an assertion that almost always was accompanied by the mournful acknowledgment that such conversions were in fact impossible (65-67).

[11] The liminoid is related to yet separate from the liminal stage of the rite of passage. For an elaboration of the term, see Turner.

> renewing other. The exotic mediates between the defining self and a more radical otherness, which at the limit would fall outside the grammar of the defining discourse. (Wasserman *Exotic Nations* 13-14)

Alencar's exotic is predicated on empty bodies, transgressive forms vacated through acts of purification. Thus his very act of writing represents redressive machinery in its expulsion of the dangerous other. Mary Douglas states: "In perceiving we are building, taking some cues and rejecting others. The most acceptable cues are those which fit most easily into the pattern that is being built up. Ambiguous ones tend to be treated as if they harmonised with the rest of the pattern. Discordant ones tend to be rejected" (45). The act of inscription, "a convivência do literário com o ideológico" actively constructs a defense of the social system and, in Alencar, vacates the bodies of the racial and gendered others, perpetuating "the fiction of emptiness" (Wasserman *Exotic Nations* 30). "A conciliação miscigenadora," says Duarte, "oculta a dominação e propicia o mito da democracia racial, ainda hoje vigente no Brasil" (199) [the miscegenist conciliation occults and perpetuates the myth of a racial democracy still popular today in Brazil]. Alencar uses what he deems to be "uma raça extinta" (85) [an extinct race], appropriating what he sees as already dead, empty bodies to recreate a relationship that is only "generative" in terms of the dominant cultural power. The form of the narrative, its Indianist focus, occults its own insistence of difference, asserting its sovereign author-ity by bringing forth subjects that are then ritually vacated. Like Cooper's Indian John, Hobomok and Iracema speak their own death sentence, just as the dead body, and not the historian, seems to speak the past. The Indian is therefore removed as an obstacle for national consolidation, the history of Brazil and New England no more tainted with their resistant bodies as Cooper's frontier. These silent or

unmourned deaths make the characters disappear; they leave no *remains*. In each romance, the author offers a reproductive cross-racial couple, pairs who produce a single child and so offer a historical narrative for the birth of an American subject. But each also engages in a strategic, sentimental deployment of dead bodies, and these romances that seem to produce love objects through birth refocus that libidinal energy through the spectacle of death. The Indian and particularly the Indian mother is a border experience, one that cannot be alleviated by the alternately loving and violent rejection of identification but can neither be sustained within the ordered world of the social. These mothers, the reader learns, exist in silence or vague whispers on the breeze (120). Unlike the materialism of the white woman, these Native mothers lack the substantial means for foundation. The Other mother becomes, not the page upon which the fictional narrative of community is written but rather vacancy itself, the empty space the white mother will inhabit, the tractless land that her death will mark as the *place* of white settlement in the New World, the *sema*, the sign, of the nation to come.

## Chapter 4
## The Task of the Translator: A Key into the Languages of America

Noo-chun kes-uk-qut-tiam-at-am unch koo-we-su-onk, kuk-ket-as-soo tam-oonk pey-au-moo-utch, keet-te-nan-tam-oo-onk ne nai; ne-ya-ne ke suk-qutkah oh-ke-it; aos-sa-ma-i-in-ne-an ko-ko-ke-stik o-da-e nut-as e-suk-ok-ke fu-tuk-qun-neg; kah ah-quo-an-tam-a-i-in-ne-an num match-e-se-ong-an on-ash, ne-match-ene-na-mun wonk neet-ah-quo antam-au-o-un-non-og nish-noh pasuk noo-na mortuk-quoh-who-nan, kah chaque sak-kom-pa-ginne-an en qutch-e-het-tu-ong-a-nit, qut poh-qud wuss-sin-ne-an watch match-i-tut.
-William Apess

"I came west, in search of silence"
-Natty Bumppo

### I. "A darkening varnish"

When Martim leaves the New World after Iracema's death, the Portuguese soldier of Alencar's romance takes two things in his "frágil barco" [fragile boat]: his son and his faithful dog (121). This new Brazilian subject, "o primeiro cearense, ainda no berço, emigrava da terra da pátria" (121) [the first Cearense, still in the cradle, emigrated from the land of his birth/his homeland]. The small boy disappears entirely from the narrative when he sails east towards the land of his *father's* "pátria," towards the religion of his grandmother and perhaps even the blond virgin so frequently invoked against his mother's "selvagem" condition. Named by his indigenous mother, Moaçir, "filho do sofrimento: de *moacy* – dor, e *ira* – desinência que significa saído de" (112 n.117) [son of suffering: from *moacy* – pain, and *ira* – designation that means deriving from], is not only marked as the mournful production of two races but also by a foundational displacement from the land of this painful birth as he is removed from the "terra da

pátria," the scene of his creation. Moaçir, the future of the Brazilian people, is thus exiled from the Tupi language and culture that he, by birth, should inherit, a historical loss that Brazilian nationalists like Alencar will reaffirm, a loss that will make space for the Brazilian nation to emerge. This nineteenth-century claim to an interrupted legacy allows the elite postcolonial population to distinguish their heritage from that of the European and this chapter aims to show how language and in particular the position of the translator both permits and troubles creole access to this national identity while at the same time maintaining the boundaries that separate the creole Brazilian from the Amerindian.

By removing the Brazilian child, the native subject is also excused from participating in the scene of conquest and conversion that follows his father's return to this land of "amarga saudade" (121) [bitter longing/nostalgia]. Unlike his son, Martim reappears in Brazil, but instead of the small family consisting of man, son, and faithful hound that floated away from the Cearense coast, the soldier returns with "muitos guerreiros de sua raça" and "um sacerdote de sua religião" (121) [many warriors of his race…a priest of his religion]. Martim brings with him men who will establish Christian cities and "plantar a cruz na terra selvagem" (121) [plant a cross in the savage land]. If Iracema's death functions as a purification ritual that cleanses the land of her mortal, maternal inscription, as I have argued in Chapter Three, the final sanitizing act of bleaching or racial "branqueamento" in the novel is this coda to her death that contains Martim's return and the spectacle of Native conversion.

Poti, the faithful Pitiguara warrior stands in Iracema's place after her death; like her he waits for Martim to return to him, he pines for his "irmão branco." When his white brother does return, Poti resolves to eliminate all distance and difference between them by erasing his

otherness in the ritual of religious conversion. The narrator remarks that "não sofria ele que nada mais o separasse de seu irmão branco" (121) [he would not suffer that anything more would separate him from his white brother]. The Indian desires to become one with the European, but instead of demonstrating the consuming power of his own active identification, Poti concedes to cultural and linguistic consumption on the part of the European. The narrator describes the conversion as a ritual of re-naming, as "Poti" is rendered in this imported tongue. Poti becomes a new subject by being subjected to the language of his brother: "Ele recebeu com o batismo o nome do santo, cujo era o dia; e o do rei, a quem ia a servir, e sobre os dois o seu, na língua dos novos irmãos" (122) [He received with the baptism the name of the saint whose day it was; and that of the king, whom he was going to serve, and added to those two his own, in the language of the new brothers]. This communion with his brother is thus a linguistic erasure and re-iteration; impressment into the service of religion and king is inscribed upon the Indian. While some critics have read this concluding event as an assertion of unity and the "possibility of combining radically different elements" (Wasserman "Re-Inventing" 134), I would argue that, insofar as Poti serves as a substitute for the dead indigenous mother, this act of conversion represents, not unity, but capitulation, the violence of reconciliation made completely on the terms established by one part. In acceding to his new name, Poti endures the erasure required by communion with Martim. This cultural effacement, committed in the absence of Moaçir, the figure of the future, affirms the child's loss of native culture by eroding its foundation in the land. The Brazilian can return to the land of his birth, but he cannot be restored to his maternal culture that has, as shown by Poti's conversion, been overwritten.

This chapter will look at how the historical romancers already presented in this study use their narratives as linguistic projects of New World nationalism, deploying the loss of Native language as a mode of asserting New World languages that distinguish their print communities from their European colonial counterparts. In "What is a Nation," Renan denies the viability of a linguistic foundation for community, arguing that language is an insufficient cause for national consolidation. "There is something in man," he writes, "which is superior to language, namely, the will" (16). This explains, he argues, historical changes in the languages of communities as well as the disjuncture between philological divisions and political realities. But while Poti's conversion takes the form of a willed consent to community that Renan argues supplants linguistic ties, this consent is explicitly addressed as transformation in and by language. This nationalist discourse does not disregard language as a formative principle but rather affirms its communalizing power. Alencar's closing conversion demonstrates how, by translating the name, one becomes inscribed in a new community, and so he emphasizes the linguistic claim of colonization upon the Brazilian land and people. In so doing, Alencar opens up the possibility of another linguistic conversion, one that might resurrect what was lost; if Native Brazil is unmade in and by language, then native Brazil could be (re)constructed in a similar manner. Missing from this scene is the native son who, while removed to Europe, participates in neither the Native's capitulation nor the linguistic violence of conquest. The child does retain the inscription of his mother in his name itself and so remains marked by the legacy of another language, of another land and so the possibility of another community, albeit a community that has been silenced. Moaçir or *Moacy-ira* recalls a historical social condition and so, even after Native Brazil's conversion, this surviving trace, a textual remainder, becomes an opening onto, or a

historical consciousness of, a state prior to the conquest by European political and religious powers.[1]

This native subject, born in America and yet coming from Europe, exemplifies the position of the creole nationalist, and his linguistic isolation explains the contemporaneous fascination with Native languages shared among early nationalist literati. Whereas Indian grammars during the colonial period worked as tools for the same conversion experience as Poti's in Alencar's romance, studies of indigenous languages, encouraged by early national organizations, belied the anxiety that sharing a linguistic heritage with the European colonizing forces would work against any assertion of cultural independence. This concern for linguistic independence produced the Spanish American *Gramática* and poetry of scholar and public servant Andrés Bello, who attempted to establish a unique and yet unified Spanish grammar that would form the basis of a national identification (Ballacay 123; Blanch 12-23). The same project was taken up in North America by Noah Webster who declared that "a national language is a national tie" (quoted in Wells 56). His grammar, spelling books, and dictionary were all produced, as historian Jill Lepore summarizes, to address the issue that "Inhabitants of the thirteen 'united' states were both too much like the English and not enough like one another" (17). While the altered standard orthography of American Spanish and American English offered by these projects met with limited success, the adoption of indigenous terms into the national lexicon translated easily into contemporary literary projects and so this Native incorporation became an important part of the *print language* of the nation as it developed around these texts.

[1] Moaçir thus functions in a similar way to Follen's "Sachem," whose hill becomes incorporated in the name Massachusetts (see Chapter Two).

Against Renan's dismissal, Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* that language, and in particular *print* languages, did play an important role in national formations. Because of technological limitations and the demands of its markets, print could not address every single vernacular in a given area. Anderson argues that print culture addressed this problem by consolidating these groups into communities of a dominant print language, thus producing monoglot reading publics (42-46). He says that these mechanically reproduced languages, disseminated throughout the community, "unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars," making those unable to communicate with their entire community "capable of comprehending one another via print and paper" (44). In addition to this language-based imagined community, Anderson argues, "print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation" (44). That is, by stabilizing language itself, print lent language an archival function, making the history it produces universally accessible to its community of readers. "For three centuries now these stabilized print-languages have been gathering a darkening varnish;" Anderson says, "the words of our seventeenth-century forebears are accessible to us in a way that to [the fifteenth-century reader] his twelfth-century ancestors were not" (45).

In the Americas, this "darkening varnish" was established not only by the standardization of American English and Spanish through print but also "darkened" by this incorporation of Native signs into the national romance. In Cooper's important Leatherstocking series, for instance, the reader not only consumes native figures and white deaths but does so through a language unique to the land that those bodies inhabit. By using indigenous terms, Cooper locates

the reader in a history that, while written in English, remains tied to a distinctly American heritage. This "darkening" move can be seen in Cooper's 1850 preface to *Last of the Mohicans*, in which the author presents the American landscape as a territory marked by a linguistic struggle. The author reveals this struggle in his confession regarding the name of the lake around which the action of the novel takes place. "There is one point," he says, "on which we would wish to say a word before closing this preface. Hawk-eye calls the *Lac du Saint Sacrement*, the 'Horican.' As we believe this to be an appropriation of the name that has its origin with ourselves, the time has arrived, perhaps, when the fact should be frankly admitted" (Cooper viii). The author struggles with the existing names of the lake that, in its alternating European occupation, is burdened by either complicated French or monarchical English. It is in defending his territory from the latter that Cooper offers his innovative appellation:

> Looking over an ancient map, it was ascertained that a tribe of Indians, called 'Les Horicans' by the French, existed in the neighborhood of this beautiful sheet of water. As every word uttered by Natty Bumppo was not to be received as rigid truth, we took the liberty of putting the 'Horican' into his mouth, as the substitute for 'Lake George.' The name has appeared to find favor and, all things considered, it may possibly be quite as well to let it stand, instead of going back to the House of Hanover for the appellation of our finest sheet of water. viii

Instead of asserting the foundational naming of colonial expansion, the name Cooper chooses reaches back, beyond the House of Hanover, to a prior occupation, by a people whose only trace is inscribed in a foreign language on "an ancient map." Cooper thus endows Bumppo, the frontiersman who strikes out for the wilderness in advance of civilization, with the Adamic

power of naming. But he also locates that power historically: Natty does not name *ex nihilo* but rather retains in this new title the trace of lost worlds and lost words.

In this way, studies that focus on the emergence of print language in the Americas, particularly that language as it is deployed in the interest of community formation (as in Anderson's study) should be attentive not only to the "fatality" of languages read as the interplay of linguistic diversity and the creation of a monoglot mass reading public (Anderson 43), but also the "fatality" of language as it functions, in Robert Pogue Harrison's terms, to make present the work of death upon the living. In *Dominion of the Dead* Harrison declares that language itself, "the origin of our basic words" presses upon the subject his very historicity and indebtedness to the past, and so to the dead of which that past is comprised. Through language we inherit the meaning of words, established by their previous practitioners; our "basic words," he says, following Heidegger, "possess a plurality of meanings that derives from the plurality of prior worlds through which they have passed on their way down to us" (76). Language, in its barest sense, is our inheritance, the *lex* is our legacy that binds us to the past and, in its providential quality, to the unborn as well (81-82). If we combine Anderson's theory of a capitalist print language and Harrison's philosophical consideration of the legacy, we see in Natty's philological wandering the struggle to lay claim to and thus institute a past, a legacy, for the nation whose beginnings he narrates.

But while Harrison argues for the thrownness of the subject as he confronts the historicity of the word, his being subject to the language that he articulates by recognizing himself as subject to the "authority of the past" (86), I would argue that Cooper's project is decidedly *not* to place the new American under the thumb of the dead Indian but rather to usurp this authority

through the position of the translator. The confession he makes in the preface sheds light on this move when read in conjunction with his original footnotes to the narrative. In these footnotes the author makes his external authority known by providing the reader with historical, geographical, anthropological and even etymological notes to supplement the work of his fiction. In the first of these notes, Cooper explains the name of this lake:

> As each nation of the Indians had either its language or its dialect, they usually gave different names to the same places, though nearly all of their appellations were descriptive of the object. Thus, a literal translation of the name of this beautiful sheet of water, used by the tribe that dwelt on its banks, would be "The Tail of the Lake." Lake George, as it is vulgarly, and now indeed legally, called, forms a sort of tail to Lake Champlain, when viewed on the map. Hence the name. (12)

But while this detailed presentation attributes the descriptive name to one of a vague number of Indian languages or dialects, Cooper's preface exposes this explanation as a lie; it "has its origin," Cooper says, "with ourselves" (viii). The name is his, its history invented. But what this footnote, and even the confessional preface achieve is positioning the author as the reader's translator, the figure who mediates between this legacy of the past and the present upon which it bears. Cooper admits as much in the text itself when he says of Natty's speech, spoken to an Indian companion in a Native tongue, that he will give "free translation" of the words for the reader, retaining only the curiosities of speech that such language entails. Natty's translation is an incorporation into English of an imagined native position and thus an affirmation of a dead Native language that has no dead at its core. The author claims the position of the translator, but

in relation to a language that, while referencing the Native past, is created and contained within the narrative itself. He both translates and undermines that translation by revealing its invention and so ruptures words and legacy; Cooper "depopulates their underworlds, [disjoins] them from their antecedent speakers and thereby dispossessing the dead of their claims to language" (Harrison 86).

Alencar, whose debt to Cooper is widely acknowledged by critics, even if denied by the author himself, establishes a similar position of author/translator in his Indianist romance, a position that both creates and guards a national print language. "A língua é a nacionalidade do pensamento," Alencar wrote, "como a patria é a nacionalidade do povo" (quoted in Jobim and Souza 107) [Language is the nationality of thought as the land/pátria is the nationality of the people]. In his project of establishing a national language capable of distinguishing a Brazilian way of thinking, Alencar also incorporates Native terms as a way of making an indigenous language present. The language of *Iracema* seems to be overwhelmingly populated by the dead, as Alencar makes frequent use, not only of indigenous terms, but also explanatory footnotes, prologues and attached essays that draw attention to his role as the translator of these terms. Through these framing texts, Alencar "interfere antes, durante e depois do texto, participando exaustivamente na produção do sentido" (Ribeiro 219). But unlike Cooper's admission of creative *sui generis,* Alencar's footnotes are supported by extensive citation, including his recourse to the Tupi dictionary published by the poet Antônio Gonçalves Dias in 1858. Unlike Bello's concern with Spanish and Webster's with English, Gonçalves Dias foregoes colonial language entirely and focuses instead on the Native's Tupi. The dictionary, which the poet dedicates "Ao Instituto Histórico e Geográphico Brazileiro" ([sic] Gonçalves Dias), reflects the

linguistic structure of national history as outlined in Karl von Martius's programmatic essay for the Instituto. In that essay, selected by the organization to set the agenda for historiography in Brazil, von Martius prescribed a thorough investigation of indigenous languages to support a national history:

> The Indian languages should be the most general and significant document [for the study of history]. One cannot overemphasize the need for research in this rarely studied field. The American languages are found to be fusing increasingly, and some of them are becoming extinct…I take this occasion to express my desire that the Insituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro select some linguists to edit grammars and dictionaries for these languages…I would especially recommend the investigation of the roots of the Tupi language … The vocabulary that the Empress Catherine ordered made for the Asiatic languages would be a good model for such a Brazilian dictionary. The most important vocabulary to collect should refer to natural objects, legal definitions, and social relations. (Burns 26-27)

Von Martius's recommendation is an imperial instead of national model, framed by this final comparison to Empress Catherine that makes the study of language a tool in understanding and perhaps encouraging the consuming reach of Brazilian sovereignty. But while von Martius's impetus is to collect a *living* language before it dies, or rather "[becomes] extinct," Alencar's romance, written just 20 years later, adopts the mournful position that Tupi, along with its speakers, is already dead.

In his essay "Carto ao Dr. Jaguaribe," a letter explaining the origins of *Iracema* and Alencar's process of composition that is attached to the novel as a kind of epilogue, the author declares that his text speaks in the language of "uma raça extinta" (126) [an extinct race]. These dead people, "desentrenhado" [disemboweled/discovered] from the earth in which they sleep (126), and their dead language are the "fonte que deve beber o poeta brasileiro" [the fountain from which the Brazilian poet should drink] in order to create a national literature (126). "O conhecimento da língua indígena é o melhor critério para a nacionalidade da literatura," Alencar writes (126), and so he quaffs his thirst for "uma poesia inteiramente brasileira" with a language "haurida na língua dos selvagens" (129) [drawn from the language of the savages]. In his novel, and in particular in his own intervention as the translator, the native son, the creole Brazilian, returns again to the scene of his creation and speaks in the tongue of his mother. His combination of dead Native language and dominant European tongue creates a uniquely Brazilian language, and so his romance, as Phillip Rothwell notes, "may thus be read as the attempted consumption of the pre-Portuguese languages of what would become Brazil, in an effort to brazilianise [sic] Portuguese" (289). Following the directive offered by von Martius, Alencar concentrates his use of Tupi on the naming of birds, plants and tribal relations, the "natural objects…and social relations" that von Martius indicates comprise some of the "most important vocabulary to collect." There are 126 footnotes in all, ranging from etymological explanations of names of fruits (n.49) and trees (n.78) to names and locations of rivers (n.86) and indigenous sayings (n.47). But these extra-textual notes do not seem to collect *knowledge* of exotic objects but rather only the words themselves. For example, in the text the narrator describes Iracema hiding something in her cotton *carioba* ("…oculto sob a carioba de algodão entretecida de penas" 66).

In Alencar's footnotes the author intercedes to translate this *carioba* as "camisa de algodão; de *cary* – branco, e *oba* – roupa. Tinha também a *araçóia*, de *arara* e *oba* – vestido de penas de arara" (n.66) [cotton shirt; from *cary* – white, and *oba* –clothes. She also has *araçóia*, from *arara* and *oba* – dress of macaw feathers]. This explanatory footnote does very little to improve the reader's understanding of the object; it was, after all, already introduced as a covering made from cotton (algodão) and interwoven with feathers (entretecida de penas). But the footnote does call attention to the exotic word itself, even offering a supplement in *araçóia*. Alencar makes these notes over and over again: the object for which they fish in the river, *o piau*, is indeed a "peixe" or fish (n.121) and the nickname Iracema earns for being such a songbird, *jandaia*, is indeed a type of songbird (n.50). Instead, the selection and then translation of exotic terminology functions to estrange the Portuguese in which he writes and to tie that language to the unique features of the land itself.

Because this recovery excludes the Native speaker (who has either died – Iracema – or lost his language – Poti), Alencar's use of Tupi is not a wholesale conversion to the language of "os selvagens," an erasure of the violence of conquest. It is instead a mournful embrace of originary loss that makes his contemporary position possible. This loss, marked by a figure – the translator – whose presence signifies the distance or gap that remains between the Brazilian reader and her Tupi heritage. This is not the resurrection of a "língua bárbara" but rather the memorialization of that language's disappearance within the dominant tongue, the "língua civilizada."

By thus exterminating the language, the author is able to access a lost language that holds no claim on the meaning constructed from it in the present because, as the translator of this

language, it is Alencar who retains the authority to construct meaning. Through his imposition of translation upon the native language, Alencar guards the reader from accessing those Native dead while constructing, through this amalgamated print language, a new linguistic archive, a location in which to assert *new* fatal figures, for the Brazilian reader to consume and become indebted. Furthermore, by choosing to focus his translation on Tupi, Alencar distances the reader even further from the threat of a Native heritage and thus responsibility to an indigenous population. The language spoken by the Tupinabá, the language Alencar's translation pretends to access, was only one of approximately 700 indigenous languages in Brazil at the time of conquest (Rohter). In order to facilitate religious missions and the advancement of white settlements in the interior of the colony, the Portuguese in Brazil appropriated Tupi, disseminating it among the other Amerindian tribes as the "Lingua Geral" (in the north "Lingua Geral Amazônica" and in the south "Lingua Geral Paulista"), a lingua franca imposed upon indigenous communiites and required in their interaction with the Portuguese state (Campbell). Through this imposition of "a unitary, all-encompassing discourse" that substitutes the many Indian bodies with a single legible one (Certeau *Heterologies* 227), Tupi had already been deployed as a hegemonic translation, one that dislocated Native bodies from their linguistic houses or dwellings. Tupi was itself a form of "glottophagic imperialism" (Rothwell 288), a language that consumes and thus works death upon other languages. Nonetheless Alencar chooses this language, fatal in its own right, as a way of changing the Portuguese in which he communicates, incorporating into it the mournful memorial of the "raça extinta." This Brazilianized Portuguese, he tells Dr. Jaguaribe in his letter, is the only foundation for a "literatura nacional."

## II. The Question of What I Am Eating: The Case of the Buffalo Hump

These nationalist literary projects, buffered by the position of the translator that is taken up by their authors, do not cease to be harried by the site of difference in language that the role of the translator simultaneously occults and reveals. In consuming native language, the author/translator may intervene on his reader's behalf to guard her against dangerous exposure, but this liminal position also threatens to transform that barrier of the translator into a conduit for the other or the other language to wreak havoc upon the stability established by translation. While Alencar uses native terms to buffer his own position of authority, Phillip Rothwell points out that this authority actually *encourages* interrogation. "The languages on which the novelist dines," Rothwell writes, "leave him with a bad case of indigestion…they introduce a network of possible meanings beyond authorial control, despite Alencar's attempt to force the languages to submit to his own intentions" (289). In other words, through the translator's notes that discover meaning in exotic words, Alencar exposes the hermeneutical act and thus the possibility of *other* interpretations and of Other speakers to whom the primary language is addressed. Rothwell traces the way Native language continues to haunt the text, despite Alencar's sanitizing footnotes, by revisiting the name "Poti," the warrior whose conversion marks the conclusion of the romance:

> Attention is drawn to the meaning of the Pitiguara's name, as Alencar seeks to foreclose it once and for all. The reader's suspicions should have been raised by Alencar's repetitive assertions throughout the novel with regard to the meaning of Poti. The Pitiguara are insultingly referred to as "potiguara, comedor de

> camarão,"[2] The author's notes once again seek to validate the etymological assertions of the body of the text: "*Potiguara – Comedor de camarão; de* poty *e* uara. *Nome que por desprezo davam os inimigos aos pitiguaras*"[3]…One thing that is peculiar about Alencar's assertions is the thought that being called a "shrimp-eater" is a term of abuse, particularly given the positive status bestowed shrimp…The entries in the *Pequeno Vocabulário Tupi-Português* of Pe A. Lemos Barbosa are somewhat illuminating in this respect and speak for themselves:
>
> poti – defecar; excremento
>
> poti – camarão
>
> (293-94)

Despite the assurances of the authoritative translation, Rothwell demonstrates here how the "network of possible meanings" defiles Alencar's authority by offering an*other* reading of the text. In consuming the languge, the reader in turn becomes contaminated by the slippery text. Alencar uses translation as a mode of establishing a space for him to write; translation becomes a way to claim authority over languages that are both simultaneously familiar and foreign. But this authoritative space both relies on the translator's ability to interpret the word and, if it is to occlude the possibility of other authors, must at the same time deny that power, making the text seem immediate. Because of his insistent presence in the text, Alencar is unable to accomplish the latter and it is this failure that could, as Rothwell's example shows, make him sick.

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[2] [potiguara, eater of shrimp]
[3] [Potiguara – Eater of shrimp; from *poty* and *uara*. Depricating name given to the Pitiguaras by their enemies]

If the interlinguistic struggle over meaning is giving Alencar digestive issues, it is the *intra*linguistic communication that Cooper's mouthpiece Natty Bumppo finds hard to swallow. This is nowhere more clear than in Natty's final adventure on the prairie (before he is resurrected in the full bloom of youth in *The Pathfinder*). In *The Prairie* (1827), Leatherstocking is an elderly trapper who has traveled to the vast "inland sea" in a last effort to outrun the settlements. While Natty had previously been attentive to language and his own skill in naming and translation, the prairie offers new challenges to the glossophilic frontiersman, making language itself an important scene for debate in the novel. French critic François Brunet argues that "There is, within the Leatherstocking cycle in general, and especially in *The Prairie*, an attitude of the narrative, specifically through which reflection on signs, and even more so language itself, is central, to the point that, in the most visible manner, it appears everywhere (*ici et là*) as the object of discourse on the part of the characters and the narrator" (Brunet 239).[4] The struggle over language has perhaps more to do with the introduction of new English language variants than the issue, present throughout the series, of translating between Indian languages and English. The American frontier in 1803 is a much more expansive space than the one Natty describes in 1757. Natty tells those in his company "America has grown…since the days of my youth, to be a country larger than I once had thought the world itself to be" (75). Leatherstocking, then, must confront the variety of American life and language in a manner quite different from his New York provincialism of *Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and *The Pioneers*

[4] All translations of Brunet are my own. I will provide the original French in footnotes so as limit interruptions in the text proper. [Il ya a, dans le cycle de Bas-de-cuir en généeral, dans *La Prairie* en particulier, une 'attitude de narration' particulière pour laquelle la réflexion sur les signes, et plus particulièrment sur le langage, est centrale, au point que, de la manière la plus visible, elle fasse ici et là l'objet de discours de la part de personnages et du narrateur].

(1823). On the vast prairie Natty is joined, for example, by a bee-hunting Kentucky youngster, whose speech is formed around the jargon of his profession, and the lower class squatter clan of Ishmael Bush whose speech is short, bare and undecorated. Between Paul Hover's references to queens and "lining" and Ishmael's repeated requests that Leatherstocking drop his wilderness metaphors and "speak plainly" (77), throughout the novel Natty continues to find himself frustrated in his communications with fellow Americans. Even Cooper finds the idea of intralinguistic translation pressing. Keeping non-American English speaking audiences in mind, the author is careful to add (in 1832) a footnote to the narrator's description of "the brown and party coloured livery of the Fall," saying, "The Americans call the autumn the 'fall,' from the fall of the leaf" (85). The introduction of these new characters onto the scene, all of whom carry their own linguistic burden makes of *The Prairie* "an analogy of the American linguistic and cultural reality, confused and motley (*bigarrée*)" (Brunet 248).[5]

While critics have focused much of their attention on the issue of interlinguistic translation, as Natty very prominently functions as translator, negotiating relationships between Indian and white communities, this troublesome communication with the English-speaking community hints at a more subtle, but perhaps more threatening loss. While I have argued in Chapter Three that the communication of legacy and thus community is effected by the text of the memorial, the troubled intralinguistic communication in the novel hints at the possibility of misreading the text and thus the fragile position of the communities buffered by these print languages. In particular, Brunet singles out the signifying conflicts between the elderly trapper,

[5] [La prairie se présente…comme un analogue de la réalité linguistique et culturelle américaine, confuse et bigarrée]

our frontiersman Natty, and another new character for the Leatherstocking novels: the naturalist Dr. Bat or, as he has named himself, Battius (Brunet 255).[6]

When the reader first meets Dr. Battius, he is returning from an expedition of his own making, a search for something to name in the wilds of the frontier. But in the two days he has been missing from Ishmael and his family, in whose company he travels west, he has not seen "even a blade of grass that is not already enumerated and classed" (69). Obed Bat, who prefers his latinized "Battius," the classification he gave himself, wants to produce a "Historia Naturalis, Americana," a natural history of his native land that would rival Buffon and his imitators. But he struggles to find a blank page, an unnamed space in which to establish his authority; the dark unknown of the frontier has already been exposed and written upon by these European naturalists. Dr. Battius is a new character for the Leatherstocking novels, a figure, like Natty, who strikes out in advance of civilization. He and Natty are both "lovers of the same pursuits" (98), men of the natural world, albeit distinct in that one imposes knowledge upon the wilderness while the other derives knowledge from it. He seems, nonetheless, a patriot and devotee of the American landscape in a manner quite similar to Natty, his rustic counterpart. He rails against the foreign scientist Buffon who dismisses the potential of the American scene to produce greatness and he actively celebrates the variety of animals (human and otherwise) that he encounters. But his greatest struggle, Cooper's novel seems to indicate, is that nobody understands him.

[6] "La traduction intralinguistique joue également un rôle important, notamment autour du docteur Battius" [Intralinguistic translation plays an equally important role, notably around Dr. Battius]

Battius is an American who seems to speak a foreign language. Cooper places this figure in conversation with characters who, though they share a common English, insist that they cannot understand the naturalist nor can they be understood *by* the naturalist. Describing the "monster" he encountered on the prairie, Battius tells Ellen Wade "there was a moment I acknowledge when the *fortiter in re* faltered before so terrible an enemy." The young country girl answers "You speak a language so different than that we use in Tennessee…that I hardly know whether I understand your meaning. If I am right, you wish to say you were chicken-hearted" (71). But while Ellen believes herself to be simplifying their discourse, exposing Battius's cowardice to the harsh light of plain English, her translation only further impedes their conversation as Battius now feels impelled to interrupt his narrative and explain that her statement is "An absurd simile, drawn from an ignorance of the formation of the biped. The heart of a chicken, bears a just proportion to its other organs, and the domestic fowl is, in a state of nature, a gallant bird" (71). The two, it seems, cannot agree on common terms and so their communication stalls. Battius thus acts as a site of difference within the English speaking community and so an indication of the variety of positions within English that are mutually incomprehensible.

While Ellen understands enough of the Doctor's speech and intentions to share limited conversation with the naturalist, Natty is a different story. The scientist and the frontiersman cannot find a common tongue between them and nothing illustrates this failure better than their ongoing struggle over the most representative of prairie animals: the buffalo, or the bison, or the bos ferus, or the bos sylvestris. When the trapper and the naturalist first exchange words, it is because of this disputed animal. Natty, employing his usual natural tropes, compares the

disappearance of the Sioux to that of "the herd of Buffaloe…chased by the Panther across this plain." Battius feels compelled to intervene when he hears Natty name the animal thus. "Buffaloe," Battius insists, is a "vulgar error," and offers in its place two latin terms, finally concluding that "Bison is a better word" (76-77). But Natty refuses to concede to these scientific terms, arguing for the practical impracticality of naming ("would the tail of a beaver make a worse dinner," he asks, "for calling it a mink?") in the face of Battius insistence that all creatures should bear a title that immediately reveals its characteristics. I would argue that Natty's dismissal of naming and the importance of names is entirely disingenuous. Not only is Natty himself a "namer," as Cooper's preface to *Last of the Mohicans* reveals, but he is also an aficionado of the practice in general. In *Last of the Mohicans*, upon meeting David Gamut and judging him to have a strong name, Natty confesses to the singer that "I am an admirator of names" (67). This, along with his careful attention to the inscription of names and his privileging of descriptive Indian naming systems, to which I have drawn your attention in Chapter Three of this study, all argue against this disregard he demonstrates in the face of competition. Naming is important to Natty, it is his legacy, his lingering trace through which, even after he has passed from the earth, he will continue to exercise influence over those to come. The language of the wilderness has, until this point in the series, been Natty's own, and if the dead continue to inhabit language, as Robert Pogue Harrison argues, this linguistic struggle at the end of his life threatens Natty's final resting place.

This crisis of inheritance is perhaps why, despite this dismissal of the power of names, Natty continues to struggle with the naturalist over the right to determine titles for the animals, people, and objects on the frontier. At their second meeting, the frontiersman tries again to gain

the upper hand on "his rival" (100), this time by challenging Battius to identify the game that he and Paul are eating. The meat is none other than that of "a savoury bison's hump" that Natty had prepared according to its "particular merits" (96), cooked on its own with none of the "foreign relish" to obscure the palate (97). The buffalo hump is "all the culinary glory of the Prairies," the narrator says. The men, it seems, are eating America and perhaps, through this "consuming affection," incorporating this American scene into their own sense of self. And so, when Battius comes upon their dining party, Natty challenges him to recognize this national feast, testing the scientist's knowledge of the land he is so driven to classify, to consume on his own terms. "Sit ye down," Natty says to the doctor, "and after eating of this morsel, tell me, if you can, the name of the creatur' that has bestowed upon you its flesh for a meal" (98). Dr. Battius accepts Natty's challenge, declaring faith in his classificatory powers, saying there are "many and infallible" signs by which he can determine the animal's identity:

> "You were saying, firend, that you have many ways of telling the creatur'?" – observed the attentive trapper.
>
> "Many; many and infallible. Now, the animals that are carnivorous are known by their incisores."
>
> "Their what!" demanded the trapper.
>
> "The teeth with which nature has furnished them for defence, and in order to tear their food. Again –"
>
> "Look you then for the teeth of this creatur'," interrupted the trapper, who was bent on convicting a man who had presumed to enter into competition with

himself, in matters pertaining to the wilds, of gross ignorance; "turn the piece round and find your inside-overs." (99)

Batty's signs are illegible to the trapper and even a translation of the signifier "incisors" into "teeth" does not make the original term available to him. Natty can only understand the sound "incisores" as "inside-overs," and instead of pointing him in the direction of the mouth, Natty, following his own translation, tells the doctor to "turn the piece round." Natty understands neither the doctor's use of language nor the object the doctor seeks, and so it seems that the two cannot resolve their situation through language.

A similar scene follows, in which Dr. Battius asks for the heart of the animal following Paul Hover's admission that Natty advised him to cut closer to the "heart" or center of the meat to get to the tenderest part, repeating the previous performance of slippage and misunderstanding. Finally, Natty declares Dr. Bat the loser and reveals that what they are eating is "as juicy a buffaloe-hump as a stomach need crave" (100). The doctor, though, is unable to concede defeat to the trapper. "Your system is erroneous," Battius says, "from the premises to the conclusion, and your classification so faulty, as utterly to confound the distinctions of science. The buffaloe is not gifted with a hump at all. Nor is his flesh savoury and wholesome, as I must acknowledge it would seem the subject before us may well be characterized" (100). As their earlier dispute has established, Dr. Battius does not know the animal Natty names "buffaloe" as such; the two, it seems, would never agree on what they are eating because they continue to function solely on their own terms. Each refuses to concede to the system of naming belonging to the other person and so they arrive at the irresolvable differend. In the struggle to gain ground on their own terms, the signifying conflict leaves as its casualty a referent whose

name always remains in dispute. Cooper attempts to intervene at this point and impose on the disputants his final judgment in the accompanying footnote in which he offers a clarification: "It is scarcely necessary to tell the reader, that the animal so often alluded to in this book, and which is vulgarily called the buffaloe, is in truth the bison; hence so many contre tems between the man of the Prairies and the man of science" (100). Cooper here assumes the exterior voice of a common reason based on a common language; the clarification he offers "is scarcely necessary" and is located in an undisputed "truth." The scene, and Cooper's attempt to regulate it, belies the anxiety Brunet indicates around the desire for a single set of terms, a common language for the American people. "The issue is in effect," Brunet says, "to find between all the characters a common language, founded in an authority acceptable to all" (248). Cooper, the outermost translator in the text, the last line of defense between the excess it contains and the reader it attempts to educate, offers here to serve as that determining authority, an authority that appeals to a "truth" that need hardly be spoken.

But while Cooper's own translation is a signifying violence against the sovereignty of the trapper, an elision of Leatherstocking's power to "vulgarily" name the animals of his environment, the author's intervention does not overwrite the scene of dispute it attempts to address, it cannot remove from the frame of the story the idea of contesting interpretations, of. Like Alencar, he can't entirely cover up the possibility of difference, the possibility of seeing the scene otherwise. It was Cooper, after all, who endowed Natty with the power to name, and in Natty's resistance to the "sign" of truth, the reader has in her hands a character who asks her to read *other*wise. The novel thus exposes the reader to excess of meaning. The author's position is revealed not as the author-ity but, like the prophecy that he inscribes into the text, as a mediatory

position between the text and something greater, an *outre-mer*, a beyond in which lies the possibility of other meanings, other readings, other prophecies.

When Joseph Smith completed his translation of the *Book of Mormon*, he did so by placing a blanket between himself and his scribe. He never looked at the plates he dug up from the earth but rather through the urim and thummim, the tools through which the meaning of the text was revealed to him, a meaning that, once it was written down in English, disappeared forever from view.[7] His process emphasizes the barrier necessary for translation to take place, the gap in meaning that becomes the burden, the task of the translator to guard against by making barriers out of words, mounds or fortifications of the *lex*, the dead as Harrison argues. But what these barriers imply is an *autre*, an outside that the reader of translation is forbidden, that the reader of translation could not understand. Smith's process of receiving and translating revelation is thus itself revealing: in order to comprehend what is being said, we need the veil. But while the veil may serve to obscure the sublime from sight, the trope necessarily includes a *beyond* the veil, the possibility of rending the partition that stands between man and the abyssal non-sense of the past or the divine.

Natty, as both translator of texts and a text to be translated, contributes to the national structure of print community, as I have outlined throughout this study, a figure through whose

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[7] Fawn Brodie cites David Whitmer's testimony to this process:

> 'Joseph Smith,' he said, 'would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear' (Brodie 61)

historical situation and death the reader can recognize legacy of a familiar community-to-come. But Natty also reveals the *unworking* at the heart of that mournful experience. If Natty's struggle to communicate to his fellow (white) man implies the struggle of language to occult the division and difference in which it operates, Natty's death scene has something else to say about the mortal experience, the experience that will be taken up by the survivors, translated and memorialized as the mournful consumption of community. The everyday miscommunications and proliferation of language systems, even within English itself, can only hint at the experience of overwhelming excess that Natty experiences, not dying or dead, but meeting death itself at the instant of his passing.

After he has discovered the dead dog at his feet, after he has made arrangements with Captain Middleton to be passed on to the future through his memorial marker, Natty has to die. He lays still and quiet for over an hour after this deathbed activity when suddenly, supported by his grieving friends, Natty rises to his feet:

> For a moment, he looked about him, as if to invite all in presence to listen, (the lingering remnant of human frailty) and then, with a fine military elevation of the head and with a voice that might be heard in every part of that numerous assembly he pronounce the word –
>
> 'Here!' (385)

In the instant of his death, Natty hears a call coming from elsewhere. He responds to a missing "Where?" perhaps, or when, locating himself in respect to a beyond, au-delà. This is not the *hic jacet*, the "here lies" of the living mourning the dead, but a "here stands" of the encounter with death itself. Because the living hear not the voice to which the trapper responds, Natty's

experience of death is incommunicable, beyond words and therefore beyond the reiteration of testimony. The final event remains one that, despite its deployment in the national narratives described in this study, is ultimately untranslatable.

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